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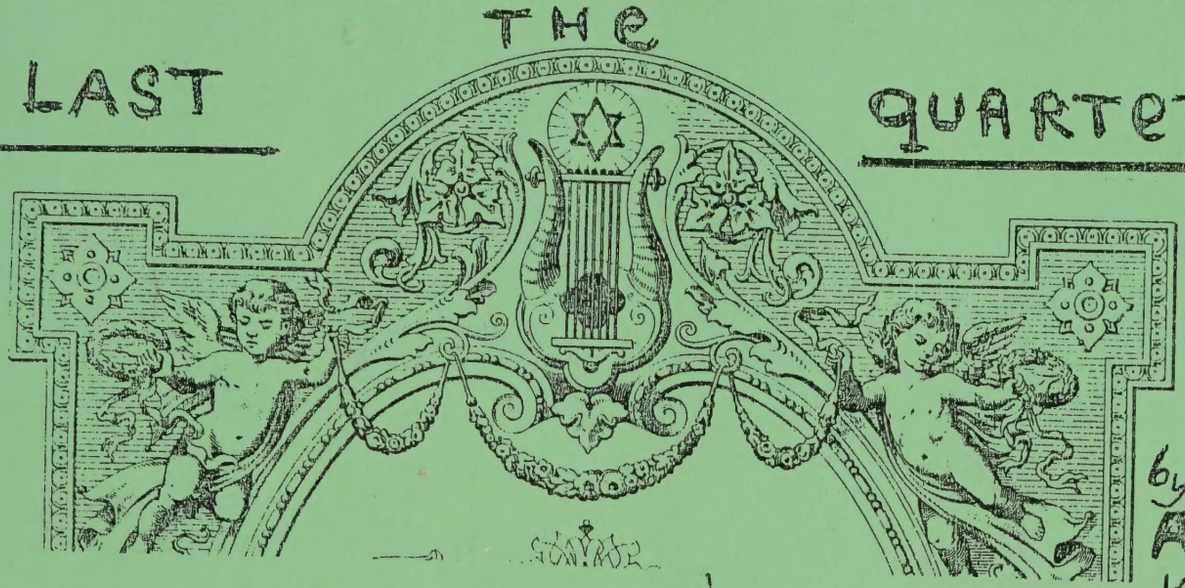
Alfred MUR

THE LAST QUARTET



by A. MÛR
VIOLINIST

A TRUE STORY

New York, NY 10040

TYPED BY
LILLIAN
MY WIFE
IN NY. IN 1953
DIED IN 1995
on 10.21

Tp/

boys 58849 Friedman
JEWISH BABIES SONG 55
Countess Potocka 91
Father Henry 22
THE JANDA FAMILY 65

MEMORABILIA

R. GORNIOK ... 57
THE STEINER VIOLIN ... 0"

AT THE BACK COVER (F.D.R)
THE LETTER FROM MRS. ROOSEVELT

MRS F.D.R'S LETTER
ON TH BACK COVER

Members of my ensemble

Adam Speera II. } violin
Bernard Ohlman II. } altern.
Joseph Fleelmair piano
Kasimir Gaolick -"- altern.
Dr Joseph Speera cello (final)
Eddy Birnbaum (cello orig)
A. M. Speera viola altern.
Henry Lax viola orig
Henry Offner viola
Offner Hevea piano
and (Alfred Mur) VIOLIN

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Mr. Alfred Mur
143 Bennett Ave. Apt. 30
New York, NY 10040

From the author

All the following actually happened.

No fancy writers imagination. I am no writer and Idon't pretend to be one. I never wrote anything but private letters or music copying. Ocasionally I composed a "Lied". Once I even started to compose a sonata that came out so difficult that I couldn't play myself. (in 1934).
That was just at the time when I studied violin with my last violin teacherNr.3, professor Schleichcorn, who was a student of Paul Hindemith.

I came to the U. S. in 1951. from Paris where I aquired my first ever fine violin, that I could afford without anybody's help.

I felt really very amazed and dismusted that all of a sudain I find myself in Paris, where my father learned his "mettier" as a 17 year old boy many years ago!., wondering and wandering how a civilized world could permit such a terrible mass murder to happen. The "Figaro" had the story abaut Hitler's suicide; That monster should have been murdered long time before he could ruin three generations of innocent people!!! And we think that we live in the age of great civilisation and culture!

In N.Y. 6.5.1952

Mrs F.D.R. was not in the mood to read my manuscript and she politely answered me, suggesting to find a literary agent and publish it.

Her letter I keep like a Bible, she INDEED was an unusual and great lady, may she rest in peace.

PAGE IIA

As a eleven year old boy I spied on the orchestra in the silent movies. An orchestra with all those diffrent looking instruments and diferent sounds fascinated me, like some kind of tropical birds, and those people, even they looked different to me... The orchestra changed the "mood" according to the action on the "siver screen". I marked the names of the pieces they played in my little carnet I took with me, and next day I tried to get them in a music store, but very seldom were they available.

It was a sad day when the silant movies changed to talking movies: tragedy for thousands of fine musicians, young and older with families. They became in one day different people: they had to start thinking in a diferent way! If one had a second profess- ion, all would be fine but it wasn't so in many cases: I happened to see on the street an excellent double-base-player pushing apart loaded with groceries, his face red from fatigue, and when I saluted him we were both ambarased, he happened to live in the next building. He used to tell me: "When you practise enough you will be a good musician, I can hear you over the window, you have a nice tone". One (EDI) cellist simply commited suicide. Many students at colege earned money for their studies playing part time at the movie theatres, to help their hard working parents. It was a tough time in general, during those years after the first world war. Some of my friends played two instruments. Joe Spira played piano and cello (IN A MOVIE-THEATRE) but he could NOT study medicine in Poland because of his Jewish religion! (Numerus-clausus !) he was lucky to come from a well-to-do familly so his parents sent him to Vienna (FOR THE STUDIES) and later on when he became a good enough cellist, he tried to get into Richard Strauss'es orchestra, and he

was successful.After a few hard years in Vienna he came back to Krakow a doctor:a gynecologist.He was no more as he used to be,now you had to talk to him in a"diferent way".---My first violin teacher became unemployed together with his little "Salon - orchestra".His face changed and he would hardly speak when I came for a lesson.He owned a fine Jacobus Steiner violin which I didn't dare to touch.It was always in its fancy case on my left,on a little table.That violin had a divine tone which I still remember,I just can't forget it, he told me once that when I come to a symphony -concert on a sunday,I will hear that violin"over the whole orchestra".And indeed it was exactly as he told me.My father took me to a concert where my teacher played as the "Concert-master" I really could hear the Steiner- violin.In the capital of Poland,Warsaw lived a violinist Adolf Gorzynski with his familiy. Somehow he fefelin love with This instrument,he came to Krakow,met my teacher and tried to buy it from him.Since Ignatz-my teacher,was in financial trouble and he was ambarassed to be a "Parasite"in his own home, he decided to sell it..Ofcourse Ignatz's wife must not know abaut it.There were several violins in the house so it won't be NOTICEBLE noticeable,while she was busy working as dressmaker and had to do the cooking in the kitchen.One day Ignatz came to see me in my home, and to my great surprise I heared the news:Would I be so kind and come to his home,bring a rope and he will drop it down nicely wrapped up to my hands/downstaires in the backyard.From there I'll have to go downtown and meet Mr Gorzynski in Havelka's caffee,give him the violin and bring back the money.He would'nt trust that thing to anybody but me,his favourite student.I did all he asked me and I went home with a stone on my chest."That's life.--- I often wonder where this darling violin with an almost human voice,where can he "live".....

— IV. A —

From the author

Many of my (con)temporaries of mixed mariages shared my fate and so, by my very musical ear, passing by a place where music was coming from, i could stand like frozen, and listen. Especially when it happened to be an orchestra or an organ. A large part of my youth i spent playing violin conducting litle orchestras (home made) sometimes in the building where we lived, behind the Stairs or in my friends homes. The boys brought their instruments and we played. I never dared to ask Roman the flutist, why there were tears in his eyes when he played his flute; He was a great athlet and a music teacher, mostly composition and theory. Later on i formed a quartet that lasted to the last moments of our freedom. Even now in 1942, I play whenever there is a safe moment. Music was in my mind since I was a little boy way back in Piestiany when I heard the orchestra in the park. My father used to take me to the park, he was wearing an army uniform, it was the first world war, and I loved to play with his bayonet he used to wear on a belt around his waist. I think he was stationed nearby in a caserne with the rest of his battalion. Just about that time my brother Fredi was born not far away in Carlove Vary.------- Today a sad day, the saddest in my life; my dear parents were taken away from us by the German nazies. In front of our house where we lived, a few hundred yards was standing that box-car that usually transported all kind of goods or cattle they pushed in all the Jewish people. No windows, bathrooms, beds, chairs!!! My father was shot point blanc by the infamous VonMaloutschky, and my Mother was pushed into the box car bound for Auschwitz,. Dr Goldblat -Feniger was an eye-witness of the shooting; she was Jewish, assigned to pick up the bodies and put them on carridge. After the war, in 1947. I met her in Paris, where sitting on a banch on the Boulevard de Bonnes Nouvelles she told me the "news". Mrs Henri Goldberg Was with us. They both survived concentration camps &

L A S T Q U A R T E T

Here in the Krakow ghetto, in this place of death and agony, I hear music in my mind. It is music broken into short fragments; a melody from a quartet, a passage from a concerto, a motif from a symphony. Nothing is complete. Music comes dancing in my mind, but it dances right out again. I feel great need to make music - to play another quartet - even if it is to be my last quartet. MUSIC WAS TO ME A MYSTERIOUS WORLD SINCE MY EARLY CHILDHOOD, WHEN ⊗ PAGE "4"

Today is August 18, 1942. It is perhaps the last day I shall live. Every knock at the door, every ring of the doorbell may be the signal. If it is to be my last day, let it be my last day; if it it is to be my last quartet, let it be my last quartet; but music I must have. I go out to look for my friends, my fellow musicians.

Down in the furnace room of the ghetto bathhouse, I find Stefan. He is a bookseller by trade, a fine violist and cellist by inclination. NOW He takes care of the furnace in the bathhouse. I am happy to see Stefan, my childhood friend. FROM THE GHETTO ONE CAN'T GO OUT, ONLY BY SPECIAL PERMIT...

Together we go to look for Adam, violinist, composer-pianist, youngest of our group. With Adam, we locate Offner, violist, and his son, a good pianist.

As we stAnd together we are silent for a few moments, thinking of this place, the thoughts of death that are the fabric of our lives, the memories of parents, relatives, friends, WHO WERE MURDERED RECENTLY, BY THE GERMANS.

Where can we go to play quartets? None of us has his own apartment. In this ghetto world of ours, three or four people live

in a room; in some rooms as many as eight or ten.

I invite everyone to my place. With my brother, Fredi, I live in a corner of the small kitchen in my uncle Simon's ~~house~~. ~~His~~ house hap ened to be located inside the ghetto. When the great trouble came to Krakow, all the relatives who survived, moved into his house. There were relatives in every room.

We go to my place in single file, 30 or 40 feet apart, in order not to be noticed. Luckily, Uncle Simon and his wife, Mina, are not at home. Mina, a heavy, gross woman, spends most of the day eating. Food is her passion,

"Are you going to play music, music in the ghetto?" an old man asks as I come up the staircase. "A disgrace, a disgrace, he says, turning away." My heart jumps at this. Certainly we do not play for joy. We play because music is life to us. Music will also be a song of mourning for my parents. Let their memories be treasured. Let music, music they loved so for many years, sound again - in memory,

We move into the kitchen, carrying instruments, & music stands.

Tomorrow may be too late. We hurry. My brother, Fredi, a faithful listener is waiting to hear our music. We do not talk. What is there to say? Can we make idle conversation? "Who died today?" "Is there more blood on the street?" "Is that the doorbell, or is it a Jewish policeman with the Star of David on his cap and death in his face?" We need no words.

We set up the music stands. From my drawer, I take the Lobkowitz quartet of Beethoven. I take up my violin. In a moment, the dead,

silent pages of music come to life, as by a miracle, and bring us hope of a miraculous resurrection. Here is music. The instruments are alive and the music sings. We play and play. I HAD TEARS IN MY EYES I JUST COULDN'T HELP READING MUSIC AND SEEING "MY PARENTS AT THE SAME TIME... Just as we are holding the firmata on the dominant, the bell rings. We stop, dead silent.

Our violist, Offner, turns pale. During our playing, his cheeks flame red as in a fever, his eyes are bright: but at this moment, his eyes dull in hopeless resignation. Offner's wife is gone - in the last transport." Last week a Nazi killed his beloved terrier, "Didi": JUST FOR "FUN" - WHO NEEDS A "JEWISH" DOG?...

The doorbell rings again. At the door are my friends, Dr. Bornstein, the psychiatrist, his wife and his young daughter, Anny. They want to hear music. They are neighbors in the ghetto and, of course, welcome. THERE IS NO MORE CHAIRS, BUT THEY MOTION TO ME "HAPPY STANDING"

We resume the music. No one has anything to say. The kitchen is like a holy place, a ~~synagogue~~ TEMPLE, a church. We are in ecstasy, contemplating infinite harmonies and glory. MY MIND IS EVEN NOW FAR AWAY IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO CLEAR ONES HEAD; TROUBLES ARE TO DEEP. At the window I see a face. We glance at the window, but we continue playing. It is the handsome face of Mark, my college friend." Many people know his face, a handsome face, very non-Jewish. Mark (GREENER) would often take the Star of David off his arm and go outside the ghetto to make money. On his last trip the Nazis caught him. They spared his life on condition that he deliver to them each week two or three Jews who have Polish papers and live as Christians. Mark, the Jew who looks non-Jewish, has a dirty job; AN INFORMER!

His face in the window; an angel of death? We continue the Adagio. What else can we do? Perhaps the beauty of the music bothers Mark. He goes away, JUST AS HE CAME: LIKE AN ANGEL OF DEATH... I REMEMBER HIM FROM THE COLLEGE; HE WOULD RUN TO COMPLAIN TO THE TEACHER ABOUT ANY MISCHIEF ~~M~~ - 3 - THAT A CLASSMATE DID ~~TO~~ TO HIM. WE CALLED HIM: MISS MARY" ON ACCOUNT OF HIS LONG

We stop playing. I take a deep breath. The others look at me. "On", I say. "The Finale". The music sounds again.

We hear footsteps. We look; it is uncle Simon. We continue playing. Uncle Simon and his fat wife, Mina, enter the kitchen, but they cannot get far. We sit in a circle, deep in a fortissimo passage. We don't want to hear them. We want more music.

Mina, my fat aunt and my uncle Simon pace up and down the room. They don't want to interrupt. But I can see they resent our music making. We come to the end of the quartet.

We put our instruments away, say a polite series of "goodbyes". My friends leave. Fredi and I face aunt Mina and uncle Simon.

"ALFRED, how can you play music now, in such a situation?" My uncle says; "You———" But he is ashamed to say more.

"Wait, I'll give you music," says Mina.

"You forget yourself," I say to Mina, IN LOW SLOW WORDS.

"We forget ourselves?" she shrieks back at me.

My uncle repeats "You———" He cannot say bad words. He is my father's brother. He pounds on the table. "No more chamber music in my home," he shouts.

Mina says, in absolute contempt, "Musician...Musician..."

They sit at the table to eat, whispering to each other.

I go out of the kitchen, THINKING HOW PEOPLE CHANGE DURING TROUBLED TIMES. SOME OF SO CALLED GOOD FRIENDS, YOU WOULDN'T EVEN RECOGNIZE: THEY WOULDN'T SPEAK TO YOU; SOME WOULD CURSE, OR PUSH YOU AWAY AS IF THEY WERE NAZIS THEMSELVES--- THEY EVEN WEARE TALL BOOTS; SOME KIND OF A NEW, OBSESSION": TAL BOOTS...

LAST QUARTET

CHAPTER II

The night is full of dreams; when the Nazis took my parents. The doorbell rings me awake at six in the morning. I shiver, trying to shake the dream from my mind.

It is the Ordnungs-Dienst, the Jewish Police, serving the Nazis to save their own skins.

The "transport" is forming.

I hear the loudspeakers blare from the street: "Everyone who doesn't work for military purposes for the German army, get out in the street and stand there. There will be an inspection."

I know these "inspections". I take a small bag, drop my razor, soap, towel, and some bread in it. I rush down to Josefinska Street.

One look is enough. Thousands of our people are already standing in columns like soldiers. Kunde, master of life and death in the ghetto, walks with his leather-covered whip. There they are; old, young, girls, boys, our lost people: MILLIONAIRS & POOR ---

I will not stand in the column. I must have said it out loud. There are my relatives, coming down with me: LAST RELATIVES,

"I will not stand in the column," I say again to myself IN A WHISPER.

In the confusion, I notice my uncle Simon, his wife, Mina, and the youngest daughter, lovely Sylvia. "Alfred, help us," they gesture WITH EYES IN TEARS.

They know I am not a man to be pushed down. I want my own way. I do not want to obey the order to stand in the column.

I look at my relatives. I am filled with pity, but I see Kunde moving toward us, gun in belt, leather-covered whip in his hand. I hide among the people in the rear, NOT TO CATCH HIS ATTENTION. I HAD ALLREADY A CHANCE TO FIND OUT WHAT HE CAN DO__ OF COURSE HE WEARS A NICE UNIFORM WITH -5- ALL NAZI „TRIMMINGS" IF HE TAKES A „LOOK" AT YOU, YOU ARE 90% DEAD.

I meet a distant relative, a Jewish Policeman who never did harm to anyone, nor good either. He marches right past me. "Lolek, please help me," I whisper. My eyes are on the Star of David on his cap.

"I can do nothing," he says. I know he can. He married the daughter of Simcha Spira, Commandant of the Jewish Police. He married her to save himself - and his parents. A Jewish Policeman for the Nazis. HE RUNS AROUND LOOKING FOR HIS OWN PARENTS...

I meet another Jewish Policeman, Weiner, an old friend of mine. He can do nothing. "Abmarschieren" !!! "March Up" - thunders Kunde, THE GHETTO ANGEL OF DEATH.

The last few thousands, rich, poor, thin, fat, all of them begin to move. We are now surrounded by a cordon of SS gunmen. I look at the SS, hoping to find a human face, a kind face.

I think I have one. A boy, perhaps 18 or 19 years old. His face is like stone. He wears a helmet; the bayonet glints sharp on his rifle. I whisper to him, "Please help me." I KNEW DEEP DOWN IN MY SOUL THAT HE COULD DO NOTHING. He doesn't move, but his eyes close, and his head lowers, as if to say, "I cannot." A BABY FACE! READY TO KILL WITH NO SCRUPLES: FOR GERMANY...

We move toward the little door in the ghetto wall. A high SS officer shouts to the men at the door, "Beim Thor mehr Aufdränglich"...the guards at the door may beat, push, kick and insult us, THEY REALLY "WORK" HARD, TO PLEASE THEIR SUPERIORS...

My mind is spinning. I know the road to death is short, perhaps 600 yards to the death-train. We are now on Livowska Street. I don't see my brother, Fredi. Perhaps he went to work early. He has a job as an architect with a Silesian-German firm. At this time work-groups of five Jews could leave the ghetto for work on military projects. Perhaps Fredi left for work early, before the call of the Jewish Police.

I am desperate. We pass through the door. Now we are outside the ghetto. THE LAST, LAST MOMENTS TO TAKE A DECISION...

I look around. There on my right is Lola, daughter of one of our neighbors, A "DEVIL" GIRL! FULL OF ENERGY. AND ZEST FOR LIFE! I ask her, "Lola", we escape?" (WE NEVER EVEN DISCUSSED ANYTHING LIKE THAT...)

She is ready at once. We tear the Star of David armbands from our sleeves. Her lips tremble, HER EYES "THROW FIRE"...

I notice a group of Poles watching our procession as we come to a curve in the road. SOME WERE WEEPING ...

In a frantic whisper, I say, "Make me a passage." They listen... From the corner of my eye I see an SS guard with rifle ready to shoot. I jump into the opening they make and count the last seconds of my life. I run into the first door in great strides. People shout somewhere behind me, "Don't make so much noise!" THEY CARED FOR MY SAFETY; THEIR HEARTS WERE BREAKING AT THAT TRAGIC MOMENT...

I fall into a courtyard, dash under a dark corner balcony and sit down on a wooden box. I hear noise from the street. My heart pounds wildly. for a moment I thought he'd fooled the devil!

SUDDAINLY I begin to laugh. It sounds strange, but it is my laugh. I realize, for a moment, at least, I am free.

I rest in the dark shadows of a GROUND FLOOR BALCONY.

Soon it is time to clean the courtyard. The housekeeper, an elderly woman, comes out of her basement apartment to do her usual morning job. She stops about two yards from me: She sees my feet.

"What are you doing here? Jesus, Maria," she says, half whispering.

I put a finger on my lips.

She understands. "You saved yourself," she whispers. "Well done. Come, follow me."

She takes me to her room, gives me coffee, offers me bread and butter. I have bread in my bag. I eat my own bread.

Two small children look at me curiously. After a while one of them asks, "Who is he, mother?"

"A gentleman," she says."

She locks the door from the outside. She goes about her morning work. When she comes back, she takes me to a small, cold room in the attic. I fall into an old broken bed. My first thoughts; how can I find my brother, Fredi. I doze into a deep sleep.

The next day I go out into the street carefully. Now that I am outside the ghetto, I can be shot at sight. A Jew without his Star of David armband, alone, not in a work-group. It is dangerous. It is even more dangerous to put on the Star of David armband. To find safety, I must return to the ghetto.

I make my way to a barber shop and telephone Fredi at his office. He understands at once; his voice breaks as if he is trying to choke back a sob while he talks. I tell him where I am.

On his way home, Fredi, with three architects who work with him, pick me up. We form a five-man work-group. We go through the ghetto door unchallenged. They assume we are the ordinary five-man work-group.

Fredi and I are together again, inside the ghetto. At home, I find that uncle Simon and his family are gone. Uncle Michael and his family, who hid for two days and nights on a roof, have secretly moved in. They welcome us back to our corner of the kitchen, where I share a cot with Fredi.

I am back again. Outside the ghetto I worked as a furrier, the family business. At one time, Lada, who used to be a maid in our home, visited me at my factory job. I begged her to find me a better job, to help me somehow. And she did. It happened that her sweetheart, Gorniak, was a Gestapo agent. She brought me to see him and looked into his pig-eyes worshipfully. I begged him to get me a job working on supplies for the German army. He replied, "For Lada, anything...Come to my Office."

Fortunately, his office is inside the ghetto. I go to his office, expecting the worst, but he does everything he promised. He gets me assigned to a job on German Army uniforms. I work on a special fur that

LYING ON THEIR BELLIES &

they use on the bellies of the uniforms, so that firing rifles in the snow will be more comfortable. In any event, I am a furrier and I make the fur midsection for the uniforms.

AGAINST THE RUSSIANS

It is a good job, an essential job, working for the army. It may save my life. In addition, I get my life-stamp. That stamp means that I can go to work outside the ghetto with a work-group. It means I shall live for a little while AT LEAST...

I think of Lada and Gorniak, the Gestapo agent. It is not pleasant. The Gestapo agent has a wife and an eighteen year old son, and Lada, our former maid, must accept his amorous embraces to save her life. I am grateful to Lada and to Gorniak, the Gestapo agent, her lover, BUT I FEEL SORRY FOR HIS WIFE--- SHE HAS TO KEEPHER MOUTH SHUT OR---
I am happy to go back to work.

Some days later, one of my good friends, Professor Choplinski, a Professor of Music, comes to the factory where I work. The Professor is grey-haired. Past 65, he stands straight and tall. He is delighted to see me. The Professor is an expert at the National Museum of Arts. In his home are hidden vast treasures; the best pieces of the collection of the National Museum, MANY BEAUTIFUL MINATURES...

He wants me to visit him. It is a great secret; we shall make music. For the past five weeks, my violin has been in his home for safe-keeping. The Professor calls a taxi; we go together to his home.

As I tune up my violin, the professor's wife says, "You know, the professor has a real Stradivarius." I catch my breath. I look at the professor. He does not seem happy to hear his wife reveal his secret. But there is nothing more to lose. He takes the instrument from its hiding place. (A BIG SAFE).

He puts it in my hands, saying," I can imagine how you feel. Go in the next room, play for yourself.- When you have had enough, we will go on to chamber music."

The other musicians talk while I go into the dark room next door. I tune the violin. My hands tremble. I think of the great violin maker, Antonio Stradivari in Cremona...and the fine violinists who used this instrument for these past centuries. I feel small, weak. My best repertoire, Bach, Paganini, nothing comes out clear, in intonation or in interpretation. But the sweet tone, the golden voice of the instrument sings in my ears and pours happiness into my soul. After a while, I stop. I am too excited to continue, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO PLAY FIRST. EVERYTHING SOUNDS SO DIVINE...

I go back to the others. They give me a few compliments; ask with whom I studied. I thank them. We talk briefly. Then we begin the Quartet.

First we play Mendelssohn. Then we go on to the Dohnanyj piano quartet in C minor.

We do not speak. We play like one man - although we never played together before that night. They are fine musicians.

It is late when we finish. The professor whispers to us that he has a radio hidden in the big living room stove. We will have to close the house door, block it with a big stone. Then we can get into the stove, one at a time, to hear the news broadcast.

The news from England is not good. The invasion is far in the future. They talk about it as if they have all the time in the world.

Early the next morning, my musical friends, all Cristians, of course, accompany me to the factory where I work. We kiss each other as brothers will before one leaves on a long journey.

We do not speak. But we each think: When again? When again?

C H A P T E R III

My factory job is not all I have to do. For a long time now there is a system of forced labor, slave labor, one day each week. On that day I work as a slave.

The work is heavy, inhuman. It takes your last breath, your last drop of blood, your last ounce of strength. It destroys your courage. It extinguishes the last flicker of hope. YOU FEEL BUT A "NUMBER" OR A NOBODY---

We form into large groups. The Sanitation Department gives us tools: shovels for snow removal, huge hammers for ice-breaking, massive picks. I can hardly lift the tools. THE JAUNDESS DESTROYED MUCH OF MY STRENGTH---

The winter has come quietly. Only those who work at removing ice and snow can appreciate winter.

This day I ask the foreman, "Please give me a lighter tool. This one will break soon. I have no money to pay for it."

The foreman, a heavy-set Pole, does no talking. He is like a machine; an anti-Jewish machine that does not listen, does not talk, does not think.

It is the coldest winter in our memories. Always below zero, fifteen or twenty below, with ice and snow coming during the slightly warmer weather. It is now hard to get wood or coal. Huge stocks went for military purposes. For our last zlotys, we have to stand in line at five in the morning to get fuel. On line, with a bag or a baby carriage, you beg, scream, push, freeze for hours until you get a bit of wood, or some coal. The heat brings magic to your tiny corner; you remember better, brighter days.

It is bitter cold as we set out in the work force. Always this work is among strangers: I am never fortunate enough to work near people I know. All the nameless people, strangers. And the boss. Perhaps a tyrant. Perhaps a human being. We hope there will be no incident, no bloodshed. We never know.

LAST QUARTET

The day of ice-breaking and snow shoveling drags to an end. My soul is frozen black. We carry the picks and hammers and shovels to the stock room. We stand in columns in front of the Sanitation Department, waiting for our identity cards, our life-cards. Every morning when we go to work, the Nazis collect these cards to make sure we will not try to escape. Every evening we must wait to get these cards back.

Suddenly we hear a shout: "Now is your end ——" An SS officer, gun in hand, comes out of a doorway. "Now is your end," he shouts.

Must we die here, I wonder. Must we die again. The desperate hard work has almost killed us. I do not want to die. Not here. Not this way, at the hands of a drunken SS officer. His sweaty face is dirty; his lips tight set. His face seems to say, "I am a giver of death. I will give you death."

The column of slave workers fall away like toy soldiers pushed down by an angry boy. We can run - but where to? He has our life-cards... We wait on Gregovecka Street.

At that moment, another SS officer passes. He takes in the situation in a glance, asks what is going on. The drunken officer, a little embarrassed perhaps, puts the gun back in its holster. He begins to distribute the life-cards.

HIS NAME: MULLER

We wait, dead-tired, trembling, hands and feet frozen. He roars at us: "March!" His voice is that of a mad dog. We hurry to get our cards.

As I take mine, I look around. I see Irene, carrying a pole on her shoulder, her face red with cold, her lips grim and silent. Irene. Irene. She does not see me. I dare not speak.

A half hour fast march takes us back to the ghetto. I forget the drunken SS officer. But that night I do not sleep. I think of Irene. Irene.

When Irene was six years old I was already sixteen. Our parents were good friends. Every summer back in those peace-time years we took a two-family bungalow in the country near a forest. Those were lovely days of endless pleasure. I had a bicycle. I loved to please the little girl, Irene. I would take her on my bicycle and drive slowly around. She was so happy; her bright smile lit up the days in sunshine. Often when we played cards with our friends, I took her on my knees. Once my brother took a picture of me as I held Irene smiling on my knees. That picture, with many others, is still in our album together with other things we have in our ghetto room corner.

From time to time I would see Irene, in the street, going to college, with her friends, a serious, but always smiling girl. We were friends, BUT ALLMOST ~~[illegible]~~ NEVER STOPPED FOR A CHAT; THE DIFFERENCE OF AGES WAS 11 YEARS... She must be 18 now, I think. Certainly she has a boy friend, I TRIED TO FIGURE SOMETIMES. I feel a twinge of jealousy. My Irene. Only a few years ago she was a child. And yet, I never saw her with a boy friend. I'VE GOT AN IDEA;

I decide to go to their home in the ghetto. I must see Irene. Perhaps we can go to snow-work together on the next day of slave labor. I fall asleep thinking of her smile.

The next day's work comes to an end. I think of Irene all day at work. In the evening I go to Irene's home. I know where it is. Her father greets me, "How are you, Alfred? Come in." We talk for a moment. I ask, "Would you like to play chess, as we did long ago in the country?"

"Why not?" he replies, POLITELY; HE WAS A FINE PRINTER...

We sit down to play chess. His wife is home. And Irene too. Do they know the reason for my visit? At the round table I set up the chess - men for a friendly battle.

Irene's father and I are old friends. We used to go to the forest together, climb mountains, play cards. I used to feel closer to him when we talked than to my own father. He was a printer on the Nowy Dziemik; a modern man with a modern point of view on all things. A strong, fine man. His wife, gentle, and a little too fat, always smiling, always picking up the conversation when it lagged. They adored Irene, their only child.

After I lose the first game of chess, I suggest cards. Irene's mother is stitching on the sewing machine, fixing a skirt. Irene, her father, and I play cards. From time to time my eyes meet hers. I see a glow in her face that I never saw before. Something exciting, challenging. My heart skips a beat. I never thought of Irene as a full-grown woman. I seem to sense her young healthy body. Her father concentrates on his cards; purposely, I think. For the second time he asks me to play my cards. Evidently I was not listening. Irene drops her glance. I try to say something, but I am confused. What can I say?

Irene brings in coffee and cake. An unusual treat. Our bread is dark, pasty, heavy. Sometimes a straw, a piece of potato or bean, a fragment of corn in the bread. But cake. Truly unusual.

We enjoy the coffee and cake and the talk. Irene's father and mother go off to get dressed. Wishing me and Irene a pleasant evening, they go out. These people are rare indeed; sensitive, considerate.

Irene and I continue our game without talking. Something to surpass all my dreams, just to be with Irene. We play cards for a while.

But I think there must be an end to playing a game. I have enough. "You know, Irene," I say. My voice is suddenly becoming loud. "I have at home a photograph of us, when we were both together."

"Impossible," she says.

"Would you like to see it?" I ask.

"Yes," she says.

"OK." I dash down the staircase in big jumps. I hurry to my room. It isn't far. For twelve years it has been our destiny to live only five minutes from each other.

In my apartment, I search out the album from our things. I find the picture, put it in my wallet.

Irene is all smiles when I show her the picture. A bright, gay smile like that in the photograph. "I'll show it to my mommy," she says. She doesn't want to give it back to me. I let her have it.

Her father and mother return, their faces ruddy, smelling with fresh air from their walk. I leave, saying to Irene, "Tomorrow morning, I pick you up, because it is the day of snow-work, forced labor."

She seems happier than I am. Doesn't she have the same heart - or doesn't she think of recent events. Or is it because she is ten years younger and therefore more cheerful. I wonder.

We meet at seven the next morning. We join a group of thousands of strangers in front of the Sanitation Department. They give us tools, shovels, hammers for breaking ice. I try to take Irene's tool and carry it with my own on my shoulder. She does not allow it. She will carry her own tool.

We are on the march again. We move out in columns like soldiers. It is a cold day, nine below zero. People ask: "What kind of foreman do we have today?" But nobody knows. He is a new foreman.

We arrive at Kleparski Place. Everyone has to clean two blocks of ice and snow (OR MUD). I get a block of icy snow hard as rock. Irene gets the next block. We begin to work.

I feel very sad. To die this slow death. Perhaps better to take the train of death. What have we come to? Polish pedestrians hurry past. It is cold; they look at us with pity. Pity. I can't stand pity. But I feel pity for others, for Irene, looking at me from the next block. We are far apart.

I count the minutes that wear down my strength until lunch. It is getting colder. Snow circles form around my eyes; a frozen white mustache forms on my face; a muscle in my right hand begins to throb. My hands are burning hot from the work.

At lunch time I give the foreman some small change. I beg him; "please allow me and that girl to have lunch together in the doorway of the house up there."

I do not wait for his answer. He should be satisfied. From the extra money he picks up for small privileges, he will some day buy a fine house. I go to find Irene.

We enter the doorway of the house. We open our bags and begin to eat. We stand inside the door, looking through the glass window into the street. We stand close, almost touching one another.

Irene says, "I'd like you to kiss me."

I am far from the ugly world. "Kiss me," she says.

Her voice is gentle, slow; the words are the most beautiful words in the world. She is a miracle of sweetness. I look at her face, framed as in a picture, by her long black hair. She is all aglow with the cold and the work. Now her face slowly flushes with emotion. I sense something I never understood before. I am shocked, and deeply touched. I look at the ground under my feet. I feel a strange happiness. My heart flutters as I look at her and my lips meet hers.

Everything disappears for a moment. I am in paradise; Irene and I in a field of new-mown hay. The world is indescribably warm and friendly, IF THAT COULD ONLY REMAIN FOREVER...

The mood passes. I look through the glass into the street. We turn from each other. I feel the weight of trouble and sorrow of recent days.

"It is time to go back to work," she says.

"Yes," I say. I hear in my mind the echoes of hammers beating the ground, ice cracking on impact, and I shudder to think of the cold. We go out, without talking.

From a block away, I seem to see her smile. I find new strength somewhere; I am as in a continuous day-dream. My muscles go about their work like a machine, but my mind is in the field of new mown hay, with Irene, my dearest beloved.

I do not notice the twilight when it comes. It is late. In the city people go about their business. They have homes to go to. They read books, newspapers, play music, eat warm meals, talk to friends, sleep in their own beds. They have their own bathrooms. They can walk or travel by bus or train or taxi. I ENVY A DOG THAT HAS ITS FREEDOM... EVEN A RAT HAS HIS "HOME"...

Here on Kleparski Place we work like medieval slaves. Our bodies are numb from icy wind. We work while I think of the marvels of our age; the twentieth century.

It is now too dark to work. The foreman announces the end of our day's work. We go home.

At home I find Fredi on the bed in our corner of the kitchen. It is our bed; not until we moved to the ghetto did we ever share a bed. But this too is some happiness; we are alive together ANOTHER NIGHT...

I think of Irene. She is now a school teacher. Not long ago she graduated. In this place and in this time we are in love. I think of Irene.

@ NURSERY.

I get ready to sleep. I think of work in the fur factory. At my work table, I cut fur to fit the bellies of Nazis, to keep them warm. For eight months now I cut fur for the Nazis, so they can lie in the snow comfortably, fire their rifles, kill, THEIR ENEMY THE RUSSIANS.

Sad dreams come. Almost every night I see the faces of those of my dear ones, those murdered by the Nazis. Sleep brings trouble too.

Once I am home I see Dr. Salomon seated at our table with a Committee. It is an investigation. They are checking to see if more people can be crowded into our apartment. „Transport" after „transport" takes away people, SOMPLACE But still more than 20,000 remain. It is desperately crowded, AND FOOD OR MONEY SHRINKS...

The questions come fast: "Who is here?" "Who is there?" "Whose Bed?" I understand what they are up to. Fredi and I have to move. Into our corner of the kitchen they want to put a large family. "You are single men, Dr. Salomon says, as if it is the final word. Dr. Salomon is a distinguished surgeon, chairman of the committee.

"Please, Dr. Salomon," I say, "please don't put us out from our corner." I am begging, half sobbing: "Where will we go?"

Fredi is resigned. My uncle Michael, his wife, his son and the two sons-in-law beg for themselves. They are afraid they will be put out of the apartment, TOO...

Dr. Salomon does not look at any of us. He figures in his book, trying to satisfy everyone.

In the silence I hear my heart beat. After a while, the committee gathers up its papers and goes. No one says anything. There is nothing to say. NOBODY KNOWS WHAT THEY DECIDED... LET US PRAY FOR THE BEST.

C H A P T E R IV

One morning, as usual, we meet in five worker groups at the ghetto door. We have no trouble leaving the ghetto. Outside, a young woman with pallid young face and bright blue eyes comes toward our group. Fortunately, the street is crowded.

In a few words she tells us she is living as a Christian in a small town not far from Krakow. She is Jewish. Since she is passing as a Christian, she does not wear the Star of David armband. She is the wife of an engineer named Silver. She walks on my left, while she talks.

Silver? Silver the engineer. I remember. He is working as an architect; he was with my brother when they picked me up outside the ghetto after my escape from the "transport." He was one of that work group. I came back to the ghetto with him.

She speaks quickly. It is death for all of us if we are found talking to a Jew with false papers. She says she had to get money for her baby, born five months ago in the ghetto. She left the ghetto to find a kind-hearted Polish family to hide the baby.

We walk on. To talk to her may mean death. But her husband works with Fredi, in the same work group. - ARCHITECTS.

She walked out of the ghetto a few nights ago. The doorman was asleep. Another Nazi was supposed to watch the doorman. He looked through a window in the tiny bus station where the SS had set up a police station. But somehow, she managed to slip out at the moment the watchman was sleeping and the other Nazi was looking elsewhere.

She asks, would I take a letter to her husband.

"Of course," I say. "My brother, Fredi, knows him."

I take the letter. Our group continues on its way.

GENTILE I.D.

That evening, before the "police hour" (CURFEW), Fredi and I take the letter to Mr. Silver. It is a message of great hope. She has found a partisan's widow who will shelter her and the baby for money. There is the problem how to get the baby out of the ghetto.

I think about the baby. During the last "transport" I saw babies torn from their mothers' arms and thrown into a truck (LIKE BUNDLES). Mothers were taken away, pushed and kicked into another corner of Place-Zgody to the "transport". Next stop: gas chamber and crematorium in Silesia. I resolve to save the baby.

Fredi and I plan how to get the baby out. Mr. Silver's wife, dressed as a country girl, will wait on the street outside the ghetto. But Mr. Silver has no heart to carry the baby to the ~~door~~ GATE; he is afraid. They will surely catch him. The baby will be crushed. And Silver will be tortured, then killed too.

Mr. Silver asks for help. I say, "OK." I REALIZE HOW I MAY BE PUNISHED...

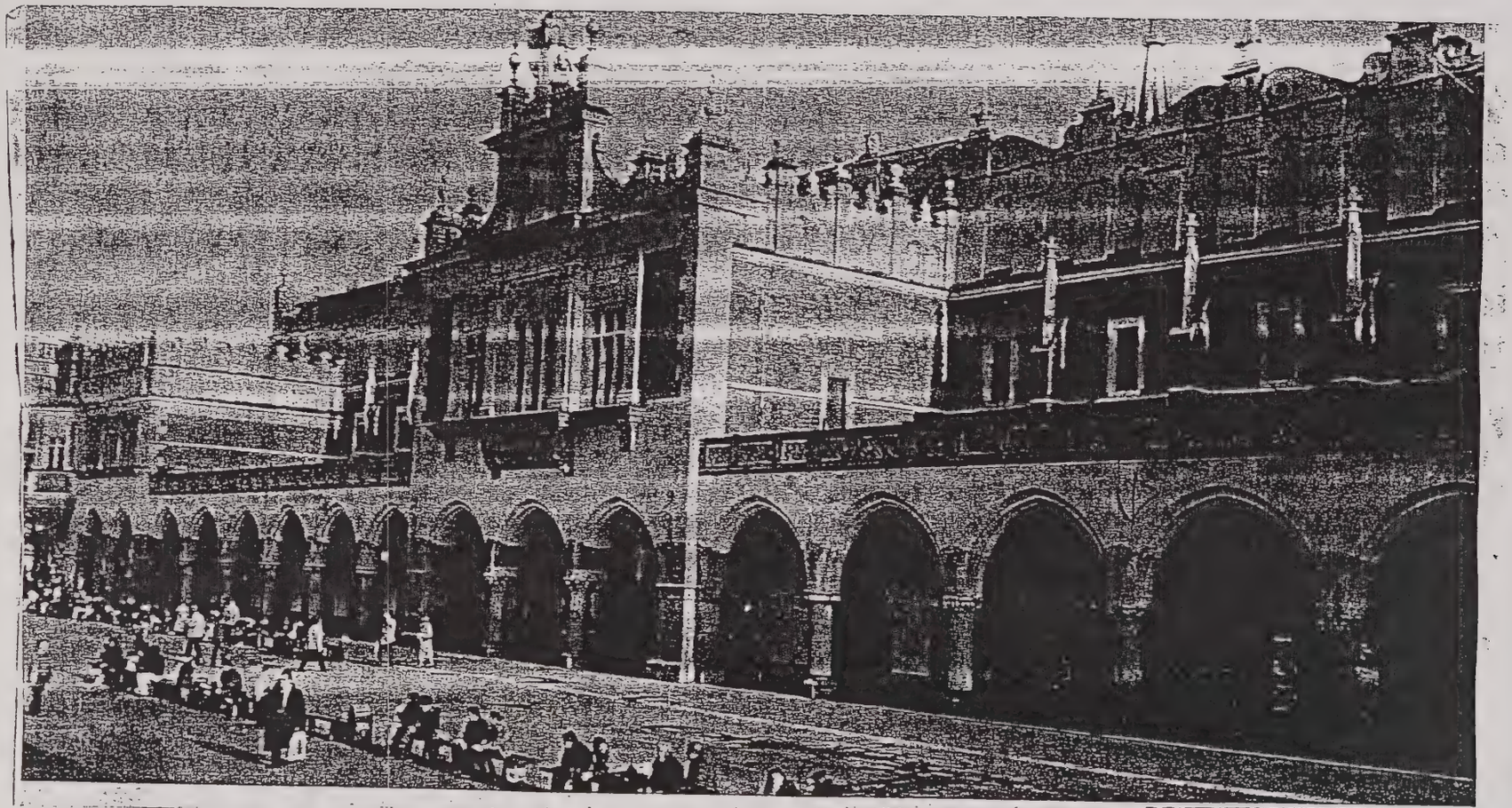
Usually, we meet at the ghetto door at six in the morning to go to work. We walk three miles to our jobs. Before twilight we must start back. No one is allowed to walk in the ghetto after 9 P.M.

We make our plans. Mr. Silver will bring the baby in a handbag to my home at 5 A.M. We will have breakfast together. Then, through the door.

I buy a bottle of gin for the man at the door. Perhaps it will help him forget to look in the handbag. My work group will know nothing about the business." (ABOUT THE BABY IN THE BAG.)

We are lucky. The gin pleases the doorman. It is near Christmas time. The doorman feels almost like a human being. I pass through with the handbag, THE BABY INSIDE... I DARE NOT TO THINK: I MIGHT „EMANATE" THE TRUTH. I READ SOMEPLACE THAT THE BRAIN

SENDS OUT „WAVES", SO I STOP THINKING, I ONLY LISTEN IF A NOISE COMES OUT OF THE BAG... A MIRACLE! THE BABY DOESN'T CRY.



ELIZABETH ZESCHIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

LAST QUARTET

Mrs. Silver is waiting on the sidewalk outside the ghetto, freezing in the cold of the morning. Silent, eager, she waits for the package.

My group marches on quietly. They know nothing about it. If they had known - not for a million would they be in the group. HEAR ME ...

As we come to Mrs. Silver, she stretches her hands out to me. I give her the handbag without more than; "Good morning. Goodbye."

She says, "Thanks."

We have to walk on.

A big tear drops from her beautiful blue eyes. It sparkles on her cheek.

I have a wonderful feeling of triumph. Just as in my escape from the "transport", again I feel I have done something. MY MARCHING-PALS ASKED ME: "HEY AL, WHAT WAS THAT"? I ANSWER: "OLD LINEN" FROM OUR MURDERED PARENTS?..

Sometimes my factory job is pleasant. There is music - piano music.

The factory is on Ring Place, Number 1, on the second floor. We have two large rooms, tables, mannequins, sewing machines. It smells of naphthalene. My work table touches the neighbors' door. This ×POLISH GENTILES BIG apartment holds our ~~factory~~ SHOP and two tenants. From the rooms in front come the sounds of music. A girl of twelve and one of fifteen play piano. They live there with their parents; father, rather old, and mother, a charming young woman.

I am delighted to hear piano practice while I work. Very often majestic piano melodies - Beethoven's Bagatelle, Chopin's waltzes, the "Moonlight" sonata - shut out the banal talk of my fellow workers. I am far from them; they care nothing about music, OR ART. It was so in college too. I had no friends except musicians."

This afternoon a visitor calls. He is a friend of Mr. Miedona, my boss. Once he was a priest, Father Henry Blambura. He still wears his church garments, but the church has excommunicated him. Father Henry always brings news. There is a radio hidden behind the church organ. At night, Father Henry and his friends listen to the news. He is talking

A NICKNAME, THEY GAVE HIM

about the news at the front. The situation is improving.

I think to myself, the sickness is cured, but the patient dies. The situation improves, but for Jews the day of death is nearer than the day of "liberation". Father Henry, as they call him in the factory, is a well built man of 31, soft, kindly. He wears spectacles. He is intelligent, well educated. He talks a beautiful, literary Polish.

In the factory, gossip runs that he was thrown out of the church for doing forbidden things. They talk about his love affairs with men. Father Henry is a "warm brother" - a lover of his fellow man.

One day Father Henry is standing at my table, watching my movements as I cut the furs. I see his eyes follow every movement. I lead him into serious conversation. It has always been my pleasure to talk with interesting people.

Very seriously I ask, "Why do those fellows in the factory, the boss and his wife, why do they smile mysteriously, a little ironically, when you come in?"

"Because they are common people," replies Father Henry. "They don't understand anything. And they laugh and ask about Tadzio Kucharsky."

"Who is Tadzio Kucharsky?" I ASKED

"Oh, he is a beautiful boy," Father Henry says, looking at the ceiling. His ears begin to flame; his voice becomes very low; his eyes seem to shine. " WE HAVE A WONDERFUL TIME TOGTHER...

I am determined to find out more about Father Henry. I use a trick to make him open his heart. I say, "I love also men."

"Women are nasty," he replies in a whisper. "Men are more interesting and cleaner physically." HE BEGINS TO IMITATE HOW WOMEN WASH AND "WIPE THEMSELVES"

After a while he says, "Yesterday, I had an interesting young officer. He was wonderful," he sighs.

"Who was the man, and who the woman?" I ask.

"He was the woman," replies Father Henry.

"And how do you love?" I ask.

"How do people love women?" he answers. "We kiss, we undress, we sing to each other soft songs. We embrace, we sleep together, We are much happier than "common people" who always do the same monotonous thing with women."

"What kind of man do you like?" I ask.

"A tall one, with an 'eagle' nose, well-built, intelligent eyes." Father Henry looks at the ceiling. "Pale face, black hair," he continues. "If possible, he should play the organ."

I see that I resemble his favorite lover: I have black hair. My face is pale. I play violin, not the organ.

In the next moment, I drop my knife. I bend to pick it up from under the table. At that instant, he catches me close in his arms, as in an iron circle, and tries to kiss me.

He is much stronger than I am. His furious "prelude to love" is interrupted; my boss abruptly enters the room. He must have heard a noise, I'VE LET OUT A SHRIEK.

When Father Henry sees my boss, he jumps away from me, and in a second is under the table to pick up a card on the floor. He pretends to read it.

My boss laughs aloud. "Father Henry is reading a post card upside down." It is true. Father Henry is confused.

They go into the next room . There he begins to recite a chapter of the prayer book in pure Latin, giving the words a rare musical quality. After a while he comes back with Mrs. Miodena, the boss's wife. She is smiling brightly. Father Henry walks through the factory, looking into everyone's eyes. TO SEE OR MAKE SURE WHO IS "ON HIS SIDE" & WHO IS MAKING FUN OF HIM...

The boss's wife whispers to me, "Now he is saying his prayers. He has committed so many sins."

His voice vibrates in melodious Latin all through the factory.

Father Henry is a kind person. He asks us, the Jewish workers, if he can bring us groceries, for almost regular prices, pork meat, rice, flour, kashe. I give him my handbag and some money to buy things.

I do not worry about Father Henry. He is honest. He will bring me anything I ask for, MAYBE HE HAS A "CRUSH" ON ME...

A few days later, Simon, a cutter in the factory with much more experience then I have, tells my boss that he can work three times as fast as I can. Mr. Miedona is a gentleman. When Simon works in the first room, and the boss and I are at the same table, he tells me about this:

"You know," my boss says, half whispering, that Simon, he speaks against his own people. He could be a Gestapo agent. Watch yourself when you talk with him." "DON'T TALK TO MUCH".

I take the boss's advice. I avoid talk with Simon. My boss talks with me about music, paintings and antiques. HE ALSO LOVES GEOGRPHIE.

In the factory it is pleasant; in the ghetto, life becomes impossible. People, even those in love, even the best friends, become cold egoists. They hide bread; they don't share with brothers or sisters. There is tenseness, as if a storm is brewing. I feel it deeply.

Those who have anything to lose are sad. Those who have lost everything wait. How much more tragedy can one take? What can be worse? Memories are always with us: YOU CAN LIVE "IN THE PAST BUT YOU CANNOT LIVE "IN THE FUTURE...

In all my life no one ever slapped my face. But one day, in the ghetto, it happened:

I am strong, healthy ambitious in those days. I come to the "Arbeitsamt" - Employment Office - to ask the Chief of my district, Mr. Schepessy, to permit me to do my forced labor on another day because I want to help my parents prepare for the "transport". Mr. Schepessy does not answer. He strikes me on the face. For an eternity, I see red flare in front of my eyes and hear ringing in my ears. Five fingers are imprinted in red on my cheek.

Memories. The red print of those fingers sticks in my memory. I MAY BELIEVE THAT I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING. I KNOW WHAT HE IS. NOW I REALLY „FOUND" OUT. I STOOD THERE ON ATTENTION AS LONG AS THAT MONSTER LOOKED AT ME, WITH HIS IMPERTINENT EYES, & WHEN HE WENT BACK TO HIS „WORK" I WALKED AWAY ON TIP-TOES & CLOSED THE DOOR QUIETLY.--

I KEPT CURSING HIM ALL NIGHT IN MY TIRED MIND, UNTIL I FINALLY FELL ASLEEP.-- I DREAMT ABOUT MY DEAR FRIEND LEON WHO ONCE TOLD ME HOW SCHEPESSY ASKED HIM TO PAINT A BOAT & LEON DARED TO REFUSE. SCHEPESSY TOLD HIM: „ONE DAY YOU WILL BE SORRY THAT YOU DON'T LIKE THAT „JOB" AND REALLY SOME SHORT TIME LATER LEON WHO WAS MY SECOND VIOLINIST IN OUR QUARTET, WAS TAKEN TO AUSCHWITZ AND I DIDN'T SEE HIM SINCE--- WHAT A DEVOTED COMPANION HE WAS. GONE FOREVER--- GOD BLESS HIS MEMORY. HE WAS THE ONE WHO AT MY TENDER AGE OF 18 „INTRODUCED" ME TO SIGMUND - 25 - FREUD & OTHERS WHO FOLLOWED HIM BUT MADE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES. LEO'S BROTHER LIVED IN PARIS, PRACTICED PSYCHOLOGY, AND LEON CONSIDERED HIMSELF AS A FAILURE SELLING ARTIST SUPPLIES IN HIS OLD FATHER'S WELL ESTABLISHED STORE. GOOD VIOLINIST & [illegible]

C H A P T E R V

One evening Irene comes to pick me up at the ~~factory~~ SHOP. I am delighted to see her after a day of heavy, intensive work. We take off our Star of David armbands and go for a walk.

An air raid is announced. The streets are dark, very dark. We walk down the street like two ordinary people. I hold Irene's arm, close.

"How lovely it is to walk on the street," She whispers. "But how can we go back to the ghetto in a group of two?" Outside the ghetto it is almost certain death.

"We wait on the way; we find a work group."

Our armbands go on again, and we come safely inside the ghetto.

The next evening I call at Irene's house. I do not go up. I ask her aunt to tell her I am here. I wait on the staircase, thinking of life in the ghetto. People are getting sick; liver sickness. They turn yellow and become very weak. TROUBLES HIT SOME PEOPLE AT THE LIVER, SOME AT THE HEART, SOME GET COLLITIS---

Irene comes to me. "I am so lonely," she whispers, standing close to me IN A WIDE ROUND STAIRCASE.

"Let's go down for a walk," I say. I think how restless I am, how very lonely I am. I REMEMBERED MY MOTHER'S FRIEND LEONA WHO ONCE LONG TIME AGO SAID TO ME: "YOU OUGHT TO FALL IN LOVE"

In the street she says again, "I am so lonely and nervous. I smoke cigarettes, but I can't find a place for myself."

I get a fantastic idea. At home I have a key to the store on St. Dominik Street where at one time we operated our family fur business. The Superintendent promised to keep the place closed until the end of the war." I have the key, A LARGE KEY LIKE A KEY TO A MEDIEVAL CASTLE. IT IS PRETTY HARD TO PLACE IT IN ONE OF MY POCKETS.

"Would you like once on a Sunday to go out of the ghetto?" I ask her.

"Yes, sure."

"I know a secret passage way, near the community bathhouse."

"That is wonderful."

"But we have to take off our armbands and walk about three-fourths of an hour to the city."

"All right," she says. "I'm not afraid. We'll walk. The streets are dark. But where will we go?" She is intrigued.

"Well," I say, "We can go to a little room where nobody will bother us. But we have to be careful, because on the floor below live people who know that our fur store is closed since the day the Nazis came."

My mind spins back to the time the Nazis "bought" all the merchandise. They took me to the SS Command Post on Semiradskiego Street 24 where they "paid" me for the merchandise. They paid me by torturing me for an hour and a half, beating me with guns on the head. Then they slashed at me with a saber, forcing me to jump from a chair again and again. When I came home and mother recognized me under the blood, she hid her head in her hands and cried. My friend, Boleslav, ran for a doctor. I was in bed fourteen days. My head was swollen, my back anguished with pain, my legs stiff. I did not expect to recover. But I did. WALKING WAS VERY DIFFICULT. THE HUMP ON MY SCULL WAS STIL ACHING. I GOT OUT OF THERE BY MIRACLE!

On the way to our former fur store, I buy candles, sandwiches, fruit. We prepare for a wonderful evening. I walk carefully upstairs. Irene is to follow a short time later.

I open the door, cover the two small windows with black paper, and arrange an improvised couch; a ~~kneeling~~ NAILING board covered with white cloth forgotten in a drawer, (NAILING) I SUPPOSED TO SERVE AS A BEDSPREAD...

The stairs creak. As Irene comes up the stairs, my heart beats wildly. When she is inside I barricade the door with a thick iron bar. I light a candle and put it on the dusty table. It falls down and goes out, leaving us in total darkness.

"Please light two candles," says Irene. "Lets have a holiday atmosphere."

With two candles lit, it is indeed a holiday. We are engaged, FOR REAL: Once while we worked at snow removal, I asked her quickly in a whisper if she would like to be my wife. She nodded her head. We shook hands; & That was all, THAT THOUGT MADE MY DAYS A BIT BRIGHTER; THERE IS SOMEONE LIKE A WOMAN TO LOVE..

And now, we are close to one another in this dusty, deserted room. The air is chill. The wind blows on the roof. We hear street noises, automobiles, the familiar bell of our old street car No. 1.

I sit down on the floor on the improvised couch. I invite Irene to sit down.

We take sandwiches. Slowly I open a small bottle of wine. We drink the first cup. It warms our stomachs, warms our imaginations. We fall into one another's arms and kiss, a long, long kiss.

The silence is so deep that we can hear our hearts. The silence echoes in my ears. I get a bit impatient. For what did we come here, I ask myself. Irene doesn't seem to think of anything. Her eyes shine as never before; her cheeks flame; her beautiful long black curls caress my face.

We are close in one another's arms. We kiss again and again. What kisses! When did she learn to kiss like this - I think - feeling her body tremble. She pulls me closer and closer to her. We breathe fast and hot, I GUESS THIS KIND OF KISSING ONE DOESN'T NEED TO LEARN. IT MUST BE NATURAL. I DIDN'T KISS MUCH

BEFORE---THIS WAS VERY SPECIAL---KISSES WITH LOVELY MEMORIES---KISSES OF HOPE,---I STARTED TO HOPE

I am a little disappointed. She notices and says gently, "please, Alfred, do with me whatever you like, but remember one thing: I want to leave this room just as I came in here."

I understand. We straighten our clothes and sit at the table. We eat in silence. The fruit has lost its flavor. The wine is unexciting as we finish the last cup.

After a while she whispers, "Are you angry with me?"

"No," I say. "But I ——Why? We are engaged and we don't know if we'll ever marry. ANY Every day may be the end. And we have nothing from one another."

"I would rather die," Irene says. "I would rather die than do something immoral."

"Let's go," I reply coldly. I help her on with her coat. She combs her disarranged hair, puts powder on her cheeks, lipstick on her lips. I lift the heavy bar from the door. Irene takes a quick glance in her small mirror. She is ready to go out.

We leave the store very slowly. Once in the street, we hurry back to the ghetto. We enter without difficulty.

For me the next day is filled with wave after wave of headaches. When I meet Irene in the evening she tells me she is going to cut her hair. It is too much trouble to keep it clean. In school where she teaches, some of the children have. lice. She is afraid she will get lice from them.

"Please don't cut your hair," I beg her. "Please. Do all women cut their hair?"

But she does not listen. The next evening her hair is gone. I cannot find words to talk about it. I break off with Irene. WITH NO WORDS...

I FEEL I WAS IGNORED, HURT... SOMETHING RUPTURED IN MY LOVE, AND ALL OF A SUDDAN I - 29 - SAID TO MYSELF; "I THINK THAT WAS A "CIRCUMSTANTIAL" LOVE, IN NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES I WOULD NEVER FALL IN LOVE

One day we come up the stairs to Stefan's home to make music. He lives in a room in the community bathhouse where he works as furnaceman. Stefan has everything we need for music, two or three good violins, a good cello. He taught himself how to play cello in a year and a half. He was then only an excellent violist and clarinet player. In his room he has a Klotz viola and many good recordings. BEFORE THE WAR HE CONTINUED (TO WORK IN BOOKSTORE. HE WAS SO HAPPY ~~BEING~~ AT THAT TIME..

We are going to make music. Adam, Halpern, Offner, Stefan and myself to make music. Fredi, Lula, Benny, a medical student - and Irene. Irene sits near Stefan. Nuna is here too; she is the sweetheart of H. Grunwald, our great poet who died because his satirical lyrics annoyed Simcha Spira. Irene seems to watch me continuously. I know she still loves me. Several times I saw her walk with Stefan. Is she trying to make me jealous?

Stefan offers to play some of his records. He has more than 300 - symphonies, quartets, Kreisler, Caruso, Rubinstein, Thibaud, Paderewski and many others. I ask for "Tambourin Chinois" by Fritz Kreisler; my favorite piece. The girls suggest Caruso in Bayazzo. Stefan is happy to play all our requests.

We have coffee, cake, cigarettes. For a moment we forget where we are. Nuna is taking English lessons. She asks me about pronunciation because I speak fairly well. We disagree about something. I suggest that instead of talk we tune up to make music. I ask Stefan to bring from his drawer my beloved C Major Quintet by Beethoven.

We play like one man. We do a fine musical job. Again I feel that life is worth living. Fredi and Irene watch me intently. My solos sing brightly, but I get more and more excited. I begin to shake as with fever. A thousand memories rush in on me. I

cannot see the notes. I play automatically and correctly. As the memories rush in, I suddenly lose myself.

We stop. I have to catch my breath. I ask Fredi for a cigarette. Irene and the other girls also smoke. In a moment, the room is full of smoke. Slowly, I regain my equilibrium. We continue with the finale.

The music ends. We shake hands all around, giving and receiving good wishes. Irene comes close to me.

"Have you or your brother socks that need to be mended?" she whispers, "I'll mend them gladly." I FEEL A PAIN AT THOSE WORDS; I FEEL SORRY FOR HER.

I know now that she still loves me. But I cannot love her. Her hair, that I loved so much , is gone. (YOUNG PEOPLE LOVE LONGER HAIR...)

"No thanks," I say. "We wrap our feet in flannels." NEVER EVER DID I WRAP MY FEET IN FLANELS; NOW IS THE TIME...

It is a finished thing. We go our separate ways, Irene and I, THIS IS NO TIME FOR ROMANCES. YOU HAVE TO BE HARD AS A ROCK, BUT STAY HONEST AND HELPFUL AS MUCH (AS YOU CAN...

C H A P T E R VI

Three weeks later I suddenly fall ill with the yellow sickness; liver trouble. I have a high fever. If the Nazis make another "transport" I am lost. They do not need sick people. For the last "transport" they pulled out all the sick people from the Ghetto Hospital and old people from the Old Age Home. Many were killed as they lay in bed. The others suffered endless days and nights in freight trains, without air, food, water, crowded together like human garbage.

My situation is serious. I prepare for the worst. Now that I am sick, I can do nothing. My brother sits near the bed, reading a book. I watch his face; I watch him eat; I watch him read. I am very sick.

My brother, Fredi; I never told him how dear he is to me. My parents, too; I never told them how much I loved them. Father and mother are gone; and I lie ill, waiting. IF ONLY I COULD SEE MY MOTHER, GIVE HER A HUG AGAIN --- WISHFUL THINKING.

Fredi calls the doctor. I hear the facts. For at least four weeks I shall be ill. He prescribes carrots, honey, white bread, fruits. It is difficult, almost impossible, to get these things in the ghetto. Fredi manages to get a little flour and bakes some bread. Hidden in a drawer in the kitchen, Fredi finds a bottle of pure honey left by Uncle Simon's family. I try to eat the honey, but because of my illness I cannot take anything sweet, BUT IT'S A DOCTORS ORDER.

My fellow workers come to see me. I am glad to see them, very glad. They tell me that now we work in another place. The new boss seems to be a fine man; a Ukranian, but a fine man. They ask when I am coming to work. Now we have seven Jewish and ten Christian Polish workers in the factory. I am happy to see the men who work with me. In their faces, I understand how they pity me. They wish me health. But they are sorry for me.

Two weeks later I feel better. I try to get up. It is as if a big stone were tied around my middle. I can hardly walk, but I must. I struggle downstairs to see our family doctor, Dr. Blassberg.

Not two years ago he was Dr. Blassberg, a famous specialist in internal medicine, living in the best part of the city. Today he sits at a table in the corner of a dark room; a useless, wasted man. His head is sunk in his hands; he seems to dream. On his fine grey head he wears a thick woolen sock. He doesn't see me enter the room.

I interrupt his dreams: "Hello, Doctor."

He shakes his head, replies, "who are you? What do you want?"

I ask him to examine me. I take off my shirt, lie down on a cold sofa. He knocks gently on my stomach, examines the area where my liver, heart and lungs are. I feel a sharp pain. He says my liver is very sick. I must be on a strict diet for six weeks. That is all, AND DRINK HONEY!

I tell him my name.

The doctor nods. "I was for many years your family home doctor," HE REMEMBERS

As we shake hands, I say, "nobody is alive any more; only my brother and I."

I leave very sad. Somehow I get back to my corner of the kitchen and lie down in the bed.

Next morning, yellow as a lemon, I join my work group and go to the factory on Szewska Street 19. My newboss stares when he sees me. The others stare too. "How terrible you look? You are ill," they tell me.

Lunch is a problem. No Jew can leave without his leader, the "capo".

Fredi sends me lunch; a boy from his office brings me a fine dietetic dinner every lunch-time. I am glad to be back at work. The factory is a friendly place.

On Friday afternoon Lola comes to the factory. Lola, the girl who escaped at the same time I did from the "transport". She now lives outside the ghetto as a Polish-Christian. Her brother, Szymek, is our foreman. She brings bad news. I see Szymek's face grow pale and he makes nervous movements at the worktable after she leaves. The tension spreads. We pass to the small kneeling room where Henry, one of the Jewish workers has his table, to ask what happened.

In a whisper, Szymek tells us: "Tomorrow is a "transport". His pale lips quiver. His face, usually cheerful, is sad and despairing. At home in the ghetto are his wife and seven year old son. Ludka, the finisher, has a boy of four. Simon, again working in the same factory with me, is a little calmer. His wife lives in the city as a Polish-Christian. The baby is safe. His people are not in danger; his wife does not look "Jewish". But he is serious. He still lives in the ghetto and is one of us.

Simon has an easy life, I think. At noon, his pretty wife comes to cook dinner for him in the factory. In addition to the usual furs and naphthalene, we smell chicken soup, vegetables. Our boss doesn't like the idea, but he does not object. He is a little afraid of Simon.

Szymek repeats: A "transport" tomorrow."

At six in the afternoon, our "capo" comes to pick us up. He confirms the information we have. The ghetto is surrounded by SS "Totenkopf" - Death - Head troops. Outside the walls and inside on each street corner are SS guards with machine guns. We hear the news, grow pale, begin to shake. I feel cold; the blood rushes from my heart. Again we die. We have to go "home" - to the ghetto, IS IT EASIER TO DIE "EN MASS" THAN BE SHOT ON SPOT?

Simon doesn't leave with us; he disappears somewhere.

In my confusion, I try to find an answer: "What to do?"

I am undecided. Here I am sick, yellow, weak. I can hardly walk in my heavy boots. For a long time now we Jews have worn special boots, high, waterproof and warm. You never know where you may be the next hour. We know the "Death-Head" troops are specially trained to torture Jews. We know that a concentration camp is now being built on the Jewish cemetery hill in Plaszow.

Automatically, I join my companions, Szymek, Henry, Ludka, Schein, Wasserteil. We go down to the street. This evening our "capo" is more serious than usual. He marches on our left. We do not talk; each of us has his own black thoughts.

On the third bridge not far from the ghetto we meet Rose, our former finisher. Now she works in a German Air Force hospital. She is glad to meet us. She knows what is going on. Everyone knows it. News spreads with unbelievable speed.

Today she worked as a nurse in a small, separate room. Her patient, (NAZI a young flier, badly wounded in the abdomen, regained consciousness. He cried, in terrible pain, turning in the bed restlessly. Noticing the nurse, Rose, with the Star of David on her arm, he called in his weak voice, and asked her to sit down on the bed, NEXT TO HIM.

"You are Jewish," he said. "I see your Star..." "Christ was also a Jew," he continued. "I am dying...you know why?...because I have done so much evil to your people."

He took her hand in his hot feverish hands. While he held her hand the strength ebbed from him. Slowly his hands became cold and stiff.

Rose rushed to call the assistant nurse. Together they put his body on a wheeled stretcher. AND ROLLED IT AWAY TO THE MORGUE. BUT ROSE VOLUNTEERED TO ACCOMPANY THE YOUG NURSE, WHO WITH A GRIN ON HER FACE SAID: "YOU BETTER COVER YOUR NOSE WHEN I OPEN THE DOOR DOWNSTAIRES, MARKED, "HEAVEN"... SOME OF THE GIRLS FAINTED...

Rose could leave. Her work for that Friday was done.

We enter the ghetto door with this story of death fresh in our minds. There is silence all over the ghetto. And I am here in this darkness of death - waiting - waiting.

During the night we are awakened by shots. But the bed is warm, comfortable; somehow with Fredi sleeping peacefully alongside, I am a little happy. I wish the night could last a year. I am tired and weak; my liver aches and my side hurts. I cannot sleep on the side. I turn restlessly.

At five in the morning we are up. We are so nervous that we cannot use words. We talk with gestures. My aunt, Miriam, father's sister, sighs as if her heart were breaking. I try to console her saying, "You shouldn't be so unhappy. Your people, thank God, live and are healthy." But she is peculiar. She always finds a devastating answer and it cuts right into your heart. She replies, "It is enough that they killed me your parents."

I am hurt. I talk no more to her, LATELY SHE BECAME RATHER CRUEL, COLD.

Everyone goes down to the street. That morning the ghetto looks like a veritable inferno. People run in disorder, pushing, screaming, carrying bags, babies, carriages, blankets, pillows.

An old man cries like a child, at the top of his voice, his arms outspread: "They stole my blanket, my only blanket." He weeps and repeats his shouting and weeping.

I don't like crying men. But this is no man. It is an open, bloody, crying heart. Perhaps he hid his last bit of treasure, some money, or a jewel, in that unlucky blanket. NOBODY EVEN PAID ANY ATTENTION TO HIS HEARTBREAKING LAMENTS...

One of my friends is Hilel Heitler, a handsome young man. On Place Lgody, he is required to pronounce his name. The Nazis hear it, think he is making fun of their leader when he says: "Hilel Heitler". They are insulted at this mockery of the "Heil Hitler" salute. They torture and beat Hilel almost to death before he can explain that his name really is Hilel Heitler.

I rush to join my furrier group. I try to think. Perhaps they will leave furriers alive. They need warm fur jackets. I give a loud order to my friends, "Let's keep together." Nobody listens to me. They all look half-dead, pale-faced, with wide open startled eyes and trembling face muscles.

This time it seems to me the Nazis have prepared a "surprise"; I don't like surprises. Let them say what they want.

We furriers form into a column of 76 people, men and women. We march to the door of the ghetto as if nothing has happened. We are told to go to a new door, improvised on the corner of Krakusa Street.

I become more and more uneasy. I see SS officers, armed to the teeth. I see Jewish Police (-Ordnungs-Dienst-)" at the corner. As we approach, they slowly move apart. Suddenly, we are encircled.

"Don't move," orders the Jewish commanding officer, Simcha Spira. I am in a fierce rage. I wish I had a gun to kill, kill, kill. I tremble with sheer anger when I see Mark, my old school friend, standing outside, with the Police, looking directly at me. Mark, the Nazi-helper.

My mind slides back fifteen years. Mark and I went to college not five blocks from this place. We shared the same bench, the same classes. He was a fine boy from a good Jewish family. I don't remember his mother; she died when he was a baby. His father gave Mark a good, strict education. Mark's college friends did not like him because he would complain to the teacher at the slightest joke. THE BOYS CALLED HIM "MISS MARY" ON ACCOUNT OF HIS LONG HAIR...

Mark, the filthy creature. I am disgusted. Mark, a tall, fine-looking man, a Gestapo agent - German secret police - anti-Jewish section.

I move slowly up. I am only four steps away from him. "Mark," I whisper. He can save me, I think, in my excitement. But he doesn't move. Not a muscle of his Nazi face moves: Mark, the Jew. (MY CLASSMATE)

They escort us to the building where only the night before was an Old Age Home for Jews. They push us brutally into a hall already full of trapped, lamenting, frantic people. Here it is definitely the end. What now, what to do?

I walk around the crowded hall, trying to find an answer in my exhausted brain. Many people are walking around like me. We are watched, trapped, soon readied for the slaughter.

I scrawl a short message on a scrap of paper I have with me. I will wait until they open the door to thrust more people into the hall. I stand near the door, and the excitement mounts. I need just one second - one second while the door is open. I will throw out my message. Perhaps someone will deliver it to my home.

I follow my plan. I remain near the door. "God help me," I think. Over and over again, I think, "God help me." There is nothing more I can do. I wait and wait. Hours drag by.

The door bangs open again; another group of people is thrown into the hall. I watch the desperate entering crowd of people. At the end, I see a familiar face. It is Fredi; he received my message. He passes to me a blanket, a pillow, warm underwear and some food. I am happy. But in the next instant I am unhappy. Inside a roll, I find his message: "You are going to the concentration camp in Plaszow."

There is no need for explanations, for details. The concentration camp at Plaszow. That is our Golgota. It is on the profaned Jewish cemetery on the Plaszow hills, NAKED TREES REACHED OUT TO US WITH THEIR BOLD ARM-LIKE BRANCHES... A MORBID TABLEAU" THE WIND BLOWS ITS WHISTLING SONG. NOONE TALKS; THE NEW UNKNOWN IS AHEAD

They push us into small groups and take us across the street to the bathhouse and delousing establishment where my friend, Stefan, works as furnaceman. Large flakes of snow are falling; it is very cold. We go quickly through the doorway to the steam bath.

In the courtyard, as we turn to the left, I notice a dark staircase leading to Stefan's room on the first floor. Only three days ago we played our last quartet here. Irene, Lola, Fredi...In that instant, the dark staircase seems to call me - "Escape. Save yourself."

I jump; an irresistible, instinctive force pushes me. I run upstairs with my arms loaded with the blanket, the pillow, the packages. I want to be in Stefan's room. Three days ago we played quartets here. Or was it a dream, like a soap bubble gone into air.

I push open the door. I am in Stefan's room. Nothing is changed. I throw my things on the couch, stand as if paralysed. Is no one here? Why did I escape? Where shall I go now? I am lost.

A young boy in a dirty apron approaches me. "What are you doing here?"he demands.

"Please, I am Stefan's friend," I answer, catching my breath.

The boy is afraid. If the police find me in the room we will all get shot. He runs out. After a while, Stefan comes upstairs.

Stefan looks at me; he looks at the things on the couch. He understands everything. His face is wet with sweat, shiny and pale. His lips move uncertainly. He hides his face in his hands, to shut out his fear, as if I were my own ghost.

In my mind scream the words, but I do not say them: "Am I already a ghost? I'm not dead yet?"

Stefan asks, "What do you intend to do now?" HE EYES SHINE WITH FEVER; HIS FACE IS TROUBLED, FILLED WITH FRESH WRINKLES. HE NEVER THEM BEFORE: A GOOD LOOKING YOUNG MAN.

I have no answer. I wait, hoping he will have an answer for me. Perhaps he will hide me somewhere and later we can escape together. The bathhouse window opens on the street outside the ghetto.

"No," he says. "Nothing is possible." He dare not; he cannot. As yet, he has not asked his Christian friends to hide him. He has no place to go, except downstairs to the steam. He is responsible for the hot-air clothes disinfection room, he explains in a whispering, dull, exhausted voice.

As a boy, Stefan had weak lungs; we knew him by his cough. Now he has this "responsible" job. We have deep pity for each other. He leaves me, my fellow musician, my friend.

I have to take action immediately. There is no time. I feel myself become hard, firm as rock. Nothing absolutely nothing will affect me.

I go downstairs, enter the hall, so carefully watched by the Jewish Policeman, the infamous Chilowitz, a renegade like Mark.

"Where do you come from?" he hisses at me. I try to be calm.

"I went to the men's room," I answer with a dying heart. I know what Chilowitz can do to me. In the room the heat is almost insupportable. Fifty or more men sit or stand naked, pallid faced, with big scared eyes. In the corner a barber cuts hair with an electric hair clipper. He makes "naked" heads. Now they can easily identify a "captured" one anywhere. There is no possibility of escape. I realize what my black curly hair has meant to me.

Chilowitz is shaking with rage. He thunders: "You listen. I ask you how could you go to the men's room outside this hall?"

I do not answer. I am like a stone; nothing can happen to me.

Chilowitz calls the other policeman watching outside in the courtyard. "Herman," he screams. His lips form in a fierce scowl. "You didn't see this guy going to the outside men's room? Wait...Tomorrow I'll show you

what means obedience. You—— ——"

Herman does not answer. For men like Chilowitz there is no answer.

I see a young girl at the desk. Must we undress here while she is working? I...I too. I am uncomfortable. But they are in a hurry. They rush me. I sit down for the hair-cut. Janda. I know the barber. He bought the furniture, my parent's furniture. He holds money safe for me. Janda does not talk. One movement through the center with the clipper, and my hair is gone. I think my head is split. My long black curly hair falls on the dirty floor. I think of Samson Hagibor, the great-hearted Jew whose hair was cut by Delilah to break his strength.

The dry-air chamber is in operation. They take our clothing. I am worried because in my trouser cuffs I have sewed the last money I have with me, paper money, for a time of misfortune. Will I lose this money? Confidentially, I ask the workman about the temperature in the hot-air chamber. He quiets me, saying, "Don't worry. Paper bills don't get spoiled."

I am glad to hear this. We take hot showers, climb into our clothes again, take up bags, pillows, blankets, packages, and move out into the street.

It is still snowing. It is now eight below zero.

As I come out of the house, I seem to find another brain. I think of Fredi, in the warm corner of the kitchen. I am sorry for him. I know he will be worried about me in the concentration camp. He is suffering more than I am, at least for the present; HE DOESN'T COMPLAIN: A PHILOSOPHIC PERSONALITY AND OPTIMISTIC TOO.

Our procession of perhaps a thousand people moves on. For the second and last time we pass the tiny ghetto door. I IMAGINE I BREATHE DIFFERENT AIR - BUT IT IS ALWAYS THE SAME COLD WINTER AIR - FULL OF FEAR & MEMORIES SO RECENT & VIVID. SO DEAR... IT IS EVEN HARD TO SPEAK ABOUT. I WAS TERRIBLY HURT WHEN MARKOWICZ A FORMER TEACHER MET ME ON A STREET AND ASKED ME „WHERE IS YOUR MOTHER?" I JUST COULDN'T ANSWER — WORDS SO PAINFUL WOULDN'T COME

It is already dark. The snow crackles crisply under our feet. We are getting white with the snow as it continues, silently.

Behind us, in the ghetto we hear shouts, cries. They are killing more of our people.

We march on, THE ROAD IS AN ALLEY. I NEVER EVEN KNEW OF ITS EXISTANCE; IT IS STEEP TOO... OUR STEPPS ARE SILENT IN THE SNOW, SOMETIMES SOFT, SOMETIMES ICY. „ HOW NICE WOULD IT BE TO SKI DOWN THAT ROAD" DID I SUDDENLY DARE TO THINK, TO MAKE MY MARCH MORE PLEASANT...

ONLY A FEW YEARS AGO WE USED TO COME TO THE STEEP ALLEY NEARBY TO SKI AFTER WORK OR SCHOOL IT WAS LOVELY AND ONLY 1/2 HOUR FROM HOME.

WE SKIED DOWN ALMOST HITTING THE TROLEY #3 THAT MADE ITS BIG LOOP AROUND THE SQUARE CALLED „RYNEK PODGÓRSKI", AND RETURNED DOWN-TOWN, FROM WHERE IT CAME.

ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE STEEP ALLEY THERE WAS AN OLD SMALL SHACK WHERE YANOVA LIVED: SHE WAS FREDI'S NANNY, AND WHENEVER WE PAID HER A VISIT, SHE WAS SO ~~HAPPY~~. She GAVE HIM A BIG HUG CALLING HIM „MY„ LITTLE FREDELÉ", HER GRAY HAIR WAS RATHER WHITE, AND SHE COULDN'T HIDE HER EMOTION: SHE WEPT SILENTLY...

NOW, ALL THAT IS AN OLD DREAM. JUST AS MY FATHER USED TO SAY:

„THE WHOLE LIFE IS NOTHING MORE THAN A DREAM"; IT SOUNDED SO SAD; I LOVED MY PARENTS AND THOSE WORDS WERE SO HARSH TO ME, YOUNG BOY. I NEVER LIKED SAD STORIES...

MY PARENT WERE TO ME A REAL TREASURY. SOMEHOW I COULDN'T IMAGINE 42 — LIFE WITHOUT THEM.

C H A P T E R VII.

Again we pass Lewoska Street. On my left, near the southern ghetto door, is the house where only a few months ago our family lived together. Our family. As we go toward the house, my mind moves back in time.

Our very own family. My mother, my father, Fredi and his young wife Wally, and I. Fredi had just stepped into his new life; he was in the very first days of his honeymoon. He had just married Wally, a lovely, smiling, doll-like girl, a refugee from Nazi Germany.

Wally lived illegally in Krakow with our friend, Eva, and her family a block away from our house. Wally escaped from a concentration camp in Zbaszyn but lost all her family there. Fredi met Wally during a casual visit to our friends in the next block. He began to give Wally lessons in Polish at our home. This was before the ghetto was established.

Fredi and Wally fell in love. It was Fredi's first love. In a short time they married. She came to live in our little warm home. She loved music. When we played quartets, she and Fredi would sit close like two angels in love, in rapt attention.

June 6, 1942 was the funeral day; it was impossible to get life-stamps for father or mother or Wally.

As we pass nearer the house, I become more and more excited. I look at the two front windows of the first floor. I look at these windows, as if I can see again our beloved ones. No one is there. The dead black eyes of the windows stare darkly at the stars of the cold winter sky. My heart is sad.

The road becomes more difficult. We have to climb in the snow. We are already far from the walls. I can hardly catch my breath.

A husky, good-looking chap on my right asks, "Need help?"

I say, "Yes."

He looks again at my yellow face and fevered eyes. He takes my pillow, blanket and heavy handbag and lifts the stuff to his shoulder. He now carries his load and mine; I WONDER, HE MUST HAVE KNOWN ME FROM BEFOR.

We pass the great iron door of the cemetery. Far away at the top of the hill tiny lights shine from barracks windows.

I begin to shake; the cemetery has all the silence of death. I feel famished and my throat is parched, but here I could eat nothing and drink nothing, even if food and drink were provided. "WHO CAN EAT ON A CEMETERY?" COMES TO MY MIND.

We continue our climb to the hills.

In each corner of the camp are high watch towers with tremendous revolving spotlights and machine guns poking through openings in the wall. The spotlights turn continuously, menacingly, from twilight to sunrise. No one can escape from here at night. SOMEHOW NOTHING CAN SCARE ME ANY MORE.

I begin to think: But there are days. I make plans as we pass the door of the concentration camp. Nazi Ukranians armed with guns and SS Nazi soldiers walk around beating their gloved hands against their shoulders to get them warm. It is much colder here. The wind blows from all sides.

An SS officer falls out of a small, nicely lit barracks. He glares at us. He is a monster; red face contorted in deep hate. Why should he hate us? What did we do to him or his people?

In slow, unsteady steps he comes toward us. He is drunk - and doubly dangerous. We do not move. The gun in his belt warns us not to move. I realize with a sinking feeling that this is Müller, the horrible Müller, a degenerate. Many of us have heard about him and his passions.

When he is drunk he loves to order an "Appeal." The frightened people are herded in columns in the "Appeals-Place", hats off, standing straight and stiff like dead ones. He walks among them, a guard at his side. Muller looks into people's eyes. Those who seem to resent him are shot dead.

He comes toward me. I feel the taste of death in my mouth. My eyes always burn with defiance. He likes the defiant look - it is a quick road to death. With an extreme effort, I give my face a mask of indifference, half-close my eyes. He passes me, walking toward the end of the column.

A shot makes all our hearts stop beating for an instant. The first victim is an engineer near the end of the column. Muller looked into his eyes, asked him something, and shot him dead before he could reply. We hear the order breaking the silence: "Take him away."

This is our first evening in our own cemetery. We go into barracks number 14. Our group of 76 furriers fills it completely because the barracks is already occupied by another group. We look at them; they look at us.

Quickly, I select the highest bed; they are placed three, one above the other. Simon, who worked with me at both factories, is at my heels. He proposes to share my bed. "I know you are clean," he tries to explain. "That's why I like to share your (BUNK) bed."

There isn't much choice; the place is hopelessly crowded. I don't consider Simon a friend; I don't even like him. His brother is a Jewish Policeman for the Nazis. He himself would certainly have taken the same job, but he suffers from a hernia. However, he is clean and always well dressed. I accept. There is no time for hesitation.

In the corner of the barracks is a big smoking stove; most of the smoke comes right into our hall. From the top of everything, on my bed, I take charge of bread-cutting and distributing bread and marmelade to our group. I throw down small paper cones filled with horrible-tasting marmelade, and small square pieces of bread to go with it. My companions stretch out their arms to catch this nauseating meal. I save some bread for myself.

The portions are enough for a six year old boy if he is not hungry. But we are famished.

Our group selects a hall commandant for the group. We choose Henry Bervald, a furrier, of course, once my school friend at business school. He is a good choice; a smart, strong man. He was a good gymnast at high school. Perhaps the people outside our group will listen to his orders. In our hall live 150 people; perhaps he can take charge of all of us.

From his childhood, Henry always liked to be boss, to be leader, to be in charge of things. But I do not believe he will be happy with this new job." As a matter of fact, within three days, his voice sounds like that" of a sick old man. We can hardly hear him two feet away.

At six the next morning, the policemen bring the "capo" in charge of our work group. He comes to lead us to the city to our former jobs. We are to work again; they still want us to work. It is a long walk to the city; ~~six~~ 7½ and a half miles. We march, 76 of us, men and women. My job is at Szewska Street 19, on the ~~first~~ 2d floor. I am on my way.

For the first time since the tragic days we are together. Four men are left from the seven Jewish workers on this job. Ludka, the finisher, always laughing and singing; Schein, Szymek, the cutter, his wife and son - they are all gone...

Our boss is an elderly man, distinguished-looking, with fine grey hair. As we come in he rises from the table: "Jesus-Maria, it is horrible...what they have done to you." He sighs. "Good morning, boys," he continues. "Where are the others? Szymek, Schein, Ludka?"

"They went in the 'transport'." (THERE WERE RUMORS OF GAS-CHAMBE

The boss's face becomes pale. His classic features stiffen with pain. He can say nothing; his voice is strangled. He goes out, staring at our shaved heads. We have not one hair left.

A few days later in the morning we hear shocking news in the barracks. They have sent out policemen to pick up two young sisters. There mother is here in camp, but they are hidden in the city. A secret agent like Mark must have discovered them.

As we leave, we see them preparing the gallows at the far end of the concentration camp. By the time our work group passes the third bridge, with the "capo" at the head of our column, we see two little girls marching under guard to the camp. They smile timidly when they see us. Do they know what waits for them on the cemetery hill?

We get the news when we return in the evening. The two little girls were hanged while their mother watched. It was a special order.

We sit silently through supper. I am on my bed. Eating is a heart-breaking pain; the food is poison.

Again, we stand an hour in the "Appeals-Place"...hats off, in the biting cold, waiting for Muller. After he is satisfied, we return to the barracks to try to sleep.

Several weeks pass. We do as we are told.

Women's barracks are separated from the men's with iron bars. Through these bars it is unusual to see a girl friend or a woman we have known befors. I am deeply touched when I see a young blond girl. She was beautiful when she was my lawyer's secretary. How unhappy and maltreated she is; her coat is thin and shabby; black shadows are under her eyes. She is happy to find a friend. Through the bars she tells me that they knocked her down in the barracks, kicked her, smashed her face, insulted, vilified her. There is much else. I am sick at heart.

Outside the barracks pass hundreds of men carrying on their shoulders heavy tombstones. They are ordered to make a road, using the memorial stones from the cemetery for paving blocks. These starving ghost-like workers are sweating in their work, watched by a Ukranian Nazi, with gun and leather whip. They are being rushed. "Hurry up," he keeps shouting.

I turn my head away. It is something like a sin even to look at this. How painful it is to do it. Let me not add to their agony by watching them work.

I return to bed and try to sleep. But my mind is troubled. I think how fortunate I am to work in a factory, like an ordinary person. I have contact with people, I work with people. But it is difficult to sleep: NIGHT IS A MACABRE PROBLEM...

Bad news comes again and again. One evening we hear that two of our friends, distinguished sportsmen, university graduates, were the men we saw shot down in the "Appeal Place." SS Major Haase kicked them just as they gave up their last breath. MAJOR HAASE ALWAYS NEATLY UNIFORMED WEARING „INTELLIGENT" EYEGLASSES, THIS MONSTER, REJECT OF HELL, SELDOM YOU HEAR HIM TALK. I THINK HIS GUN „TALKS" MORE THAN HE, HIMSELF.. I AVOID HIS EYES - 48 - AND LOOK SOMEWHERE ELSE BUT WATCH HIM CLOSELY...

SS Major Hasse. Why did he do this? Why did he kill these two, standing with their group silent and afraid in the "Appeal Place"? Major Haase is trying to show Muller that he too can do a job. Major Haase must show Muller; Muller must show Strojewsky. All must show Gett, the commandant. The death quartet must show that it can bring death.

In the middle of the night we are aroused suddenly. What has happened? What is going on? My heart pounds wildly. We are ordered to get up and form columns. It is 2:30 A.M. Five minutes ago our barrack's commandant received an order to "clean" the whole barracks within an hour. It is a special form of night torture.

In the noise, I gradually understand. Friedman, awakened by a policeman, screams in everyone's ears and pounds with a spoon on a big tray. I think Friedman has lost his mind. He pounds on the tray and keeps shouting.

Friedman. As I get up, I think of his father, his blind father, a music teacher, a writer of songs and a singer. Friedman's father and mother died together. His older brother was a competent jazz pianist and accordionist. He used to play with my jazz band when we had a job out of town. Now he is in Russia. He was in the Russian Zone of Poland, but asked to be sent home to Poland. Instead, he was sent to Siberia to forced labor in the forests. Just before the movement into the ghetto, I helped Friedman sell his piano to my friend, Boleslaw, a sergeant in the Polish army before the war, and a good pianist. Boleslaw bought the piano cheap for his son.

Quartets. We played quartets, looked through the windows at the fresh green hills, Krzemiaki. Then no one thought that a concentration camp would sit on these hills.

Friedman is screaming desperately. "Hurry, hurry. There is no time." We rush to our work. We pour ice-cold water on the dirty floor and start scrubbing. The water comes from the pump outside; ice cold. As we go out to get it we may be shot down in the dark by hidden guards who patrol the passages between the barracks. (UKRAINIANS)

Going for water, I breath my last prayer. We get more and more water. We scrub and break our backs. The cleaning is almost finished. when Camp Commandant Gett strides in.

Gett is a tall monster, gun in left hand, leather whip in right. A dog is always his advance guard. He comes toward us. One of the policemen, Schoenherz, snaps to a smart military salute as Gett enters the barracks. Gett hears a noise, swings around to see what is going on. The "Cleaning" could not possibly be finished. Someone is still working.

Gett pounces on the policeman, Schoenherz. "When did you bring my order for cleaning?"

Schoenherz glances at his wrist watch. "Just fifteen minutes ago," he says. At almost the same instant, Gett's right hand swings the leather whip in a fury on the policeman's face; once from the left, once from the right. Again from the left.

"I teach you discipline," hisses Gett.

Schoenherz, standing at attention, does not move. His body sways with each blow. His eyes are lowered. He knows only one thing, that the slightest movement or the slightest word of reply will bring instant death.

We know Gett. With a sinking heart, I look at poor Schoenherz. He was a friend of mine, once, a lawyer, QUIET, ELEGANT YOUNG MAN.

We met at a summer camp in the mountains. He was there with his lovely fiancee. They enjoyed our quartets very much and invited us to play at their home. In a joke, I promised to play for their wedding. But the joke came true; I did play at the wedding in a little castle belonging to Graf T ARNOWSKY. The bride looked like an angel, beautiful in her white dress. I danced with the bride, and so did all the men of the party. This was to bring the bride luck.

Here is Schoenherz, standing, red, bloody strips where his face was, his head bowed, his hands stiff at his sides. Blood streaks over his black tie. Long ago his young wife went on a "transport".

But Gett seems to have enough. We have enough too. He leaves abruptly. Lights go off. We climb back to our (BUNK beds.

The concentration camp is always seething with news. It is never good news; always there are overtones of tragedy.

In the women's section, hunger is no longer news. We are used to the reports. I hear that a girl named Kristine has been publicly shamed. They cut off her long, golden curls and shaved her head because someone told the commandant that she was pregnant. Kristine. I knew that girl. In her family money was plentiful. For a fabulous sum of money, the entire family bought life-cards. They all lived comfortably inside the ghetto, and to their ghetto home came young people. Kristine and her three sisters would talk and dance and entertain as if the ghetto never existed. Now, Kristine, one of the four wealthy sisters, is publicly humiliated and her head shaved.

In the ghetto I used to give violin lessons to eight talented boys. The money helped. By teaching violin I defied the Nazis and did what I wanted to do. In the concentration camp this is all lost, I CAN'T EVEN FIND THEM. NEW FACES ALL THE TIME. AUTOMATICLY I TRY TO MAKE FRIENDS, BUT THE PEOPLE ARE RATHER „COLD" AND RESIGNED. I AM BY NOW MORE BITTER & DISAPPOINTED THAT THE WHOLE WORLD DOES NOTHING TO SAVE MILLIONS OF INOCENT PEOPLE

AND LET THEM BE SLAUGHTERED. BUT I AM NEVER RESIGNED, NO! LAST QUARTET NOT ME!

I hear that Barbara, a 19 year old blond beauty, sister of one of my pupils, to get more soup and bread, entertained the lustful attention of H——— K ———, the butcher cook. I am shocked. But it becomes more and more the ordinary way of life for girls.

In fact, many of the girls and women will do anything to get dresses to replace their tattered rags. For a scrap of food they will do anything. It is sad to think of these poor creatures, girls you knew since childhood, or met, clean and respectable at college. Often they are picked up for forced labor in German military hospitals, airports or other places. Young Nazi soldiers offer them food, cigarettes or special privileges for "love". Many of the girls, lonely, hungry, desperate, accept lustful caresses in covered freight cars or other hidden places.

In spite of our troubles, we breath new hope as the weather improves. There are signs of spring. There is no reason for hope, but the change of season gives us an idea that all things may change.

One evening, as we return to camp, we are stopped at the entrance to the barracks. A Gestapo chief from Oleandry, SS Officer Schorner, comes to check our group of furriers.

We are worried. What can be wrong? What has happened? We soon find out. One of our group, Gang, escaped from his foreman job, taking with him a bundle of furs that the Nazis had stolen from Jewish fur stores in the city. SS Officer Schorner demands that we tell him where Gang is. If not, we shall never again return to our jobs.

This is a major calamity. We cannot answer the Nazi, because none of us knows where Gang is. We cannot work: no work; the end!

Next morning we go, as usual, to the "Appeal Place." I am afraid. There is killing and beating on the "Appeal Place." Finally, we go back to the barracks to wait for orders. We wait and wait.

In barracks we talk about Gett, the monster, who makes merry in his warm, comfortable house. He has brought his sweetheart, Angela, who looks like a blonde angel. The women told us that his beautiful blonde girl is a beast, an insane, insatiate beast. She comes to the women's barracks, beats them mercilessly, insults them, gives them horrible, inhuman orders. It is hard to understand how such a beautiful woman can be so vile.

I think of the musicians at Gett's parties. Herman Tenzer's band plays for dancing. Gett always has a house full of Gestapo agents and their friends. The musicians do very well indeed. The band leader has a new tuxedo which Gett ordered for him. Tenzer's wife has permission to light Friday evening candles in a corner of the barracks. Gett orders the cooks and butchers to give musicians extra rations and better food. I think of them - the musicians; their art and their bellies.

I could be a musician for Gett too. But to me music is a sacred trust. I do not chose to make music, even dance music, for Nazi pigs. It is not for them. I am determined to keep myself to myself. I wish to be a furrier among furriers.

We stay in barracks.

A few days later, my brother comes to see me. He is now in the concentration camp; in his work group are engineers, architects. I am happy to see my brother but I see that he is deathly pale. He can hardly walk. I feel anger surging through my heart. What have they done to Fredi? It would have ...if they would have done it to me instead. I ask him to sit down. He cannot sit.

By Gett's orders, all the people in Fredi's barracks received 25 savage blows on the back. A giant Ukranian counted the blows, strictly, "honestly"... The men are all black, red, swollen.

Most of them fell unconscious after the tenth blow. The Ukranian merely turned them over and continued. He beat them unmercifully even though they were flat on the ground.

The first man beaten was Grunberg, a well known architect in our town. He was group commandant. My brother gives me the details.

I have no words to express my useless fury. I take Fredi, and help him back to his barracks. I give him my pillow.

A chill spring wind reminds us that winter is not yet gone. We have to move stones. We stand five yards apart. We must throw stones to the man at the right. A guard watches us. We cannot walk; we must not carry the stones; we must throw them. In a short time, our feet are bloody from falling stones, our hands aching and swollen, our last gloves in pieces. When we finish moving the stones, we move them back where they came from. This goes on and on.

The Nazis are putting an electrically-charged fence around the camp. The guards in the watch towers are very careful. Still my mind boils with one idea: Freedom. Freedom or death! I cannot suffer any longer. It must come to an end - one way or another.

I go to Fredi and talk to him about my plan. But I have no plan until I begin to talk. His questions are direct: "Where will you go?"

My mind jumps as I talk. "To Janda," I say. Janda. Why not? Janda was my barber before the ghetto was established. Janda cut my hair in the ghetto bathhouse. Long ago he bought our furniture. He bought the furniture of other relatives too. He has some of my clothes, a violin. Janda. He is the man.

My brother asks, "Janda?"

"Yes," I say, trying to believe it myself.

LAST QUARTET

I tell Fredi how Janda and his wife came to visit me at the factory where I worked at Szewska Street 19. They brought food, bread, butter, fruits and chocolate. I was delighted to see them. Janda was glad to see me, told me not to worry about anything. If I cannot stay in camp, he said, come to his home and stay as long as I like.

"Janda will take me in," I say, almost convinced. His promise to me could not be idle chatter. Or could it? WE SHALL SEE...

This must be the answer. This is a time for action. Let me act, then, and not a word more.

My brother embraces me quietly. Fredi is all I have in the world; my last relative. We do not need to talk.

One morning we throw stones as usual, carry coal and earth from one place to another (AND BACK). I notice a big truck coming in from the ghetto. It is full of all kinds of furniture, pots and pans, clothing and a multitude of household articles.

I go over to the driver, a Polish workman, and try to strike up a conversation. He seems friendly.

"All this junk I bring from the ghetto," he says. "Your people, the last still left in the ghetto. I pick up these things all day long on the streets, after the last massacre."

I nod my head. He continues to talk. "We sold the babies. You know, the Jewish babies your people gave us just before the last "transport". We were afraid, and we sold the babies at the railroad station. It was a panic among us. Rich families without children bought babies. A few German officials leaving Poland to go home bought babies. It wasn't our fault. We were in panic." BEAUTIFUL LITTLE BABIES, CLEAN, CRYING; THE ONLY "CONSOLATION" TO THE YOUNG WEEPING MOTHERS WAS THE THOUGHT THAT AT LEAST THEIR BABIES WILL GROW UP, WHILE THEY WILL BE SOMEPLACE GOD KNOWS WHERE...

I listen to this Pole. It is my chance, I think. I risk a question: "Can you get me out of camp wrapped in a rug, or a bag or something as you go to make a pick-up? I give you money."

He looks at me with his half-open eyes. "Why not?"

I hold my breath in fear and hope all at once. In front of my eyes I see the gallows, the two young girls hanging for daring to leave camp. But we must settle the business. We arrange a price. It is set for tomorrow morning at nine o'clock.

I hurry to Fredi. When we are alone, I tell him in whispers about the truck, about the program. Somehow, he shows no ray of hope in his words. "Where will you go?" he asks.

"To Janda," I reply.

There is a long silence.

"What is the matter, Fredi?"

"I don't trust this Janda," says Fredi. "He doesn't look so honest."

I go back to my barracks. This is a road to escape. If it is the wrong road, I shall die. If it is the right road, I shall live. I am resolved to leave camp.

That night as I climb into bed I talk to my neighbor, Hemio. He is also on top; his bed is to the left. I remember his sister, Flora, an excellent violinist. We knew each other only by sound. They lived across the street from us for 25 years, but we did not speak. I used to listen to her practice, her bright singing tone, her fabulous technique. Once when I went toward my studio window after I finished practicing Bach's Prelude in E Major for my concert, I saw her standing under my window, listening. She seemed confused when she saw me looking at her, and disappeared quickly.

IN KRAKOW OUR HOMETOWN ACROSS THE STREET FROM OUR HOUSE

LAST QUARTET

"Where is Flora?" I ask, forgetting for a moment that one does not ask questions LIKE THAT. IT HURTS DEEPLY.

"She is gone," says Hemio. He bursts into tears. In a trembling voice he says, "Goodnight, Alfred." I ~~am~~ FELT sorry I asked about her.

I think of Hemio, a few weeks back on a Friday, when we worked at forced labor on the ice and snow in an uptown German district. I gave him and the others sandwiches and food.

It was bitter cold that day. We were working on Slovacky Avenue; as it happened I was directly in front of Mr. Gorniak's windows. Our last cham bermaid, Lada, lived with that family. Lada, the maid we treated like a member of the family. Wondering if I would see her, I worked in front of that house.

In the afternoon, by chance, Mrs. Gorniak came to the window. She saw the Star of David armband, and went away. In a few moments, she returned with Lada. We stared at each other. Lada smiled; then her face dimmed in sadness. Tears began to drip from her blue eyes. She signaled to me to enter the doorway.

Lada, who introduced me to Mr. Gorniak, the Gestapo agent of the forced labor section. Lada, whose sweetheart, Mr. Gorniak, helped me to a better job a few months before and probably saved my life at that time. Lada, our last maid, as near to me as a member of the family.

Lada takes me by the hand as I come in. She brings sandwiches and coffee. She is the maid here, second mistress in managing the household but first mistress in her filthy master's heart. Here in the household of a Gestapo agent, she is safe. She will not be sent to forced labor in Germany.

When I left, I kissed Lada on the cheek. She kissed me ~~Too~~ We shook hands. She gave me a load of sandwiches for the road; I NOTICED TEARS IN HER EYES, USUALLY "SMILING" BLUE EYES. I WAS GLAD THAT AT LEAST SHE HAS A "ROOF OVER HER HEAD". WHO KNOWS-57- WHAT TOMORROW WOULD BRING.

There was Hemio, nearsighted, blond, my neighbor in the barracks, when I came out. He opened his eyes wide. I did not wait for a request. I gave out my sandwiches, shared all the food with Hemio and the others. Hemio straightened his strong body, sighed when he began to eat.

Hemio, my neighbor to the left, on the top BUNK bed in the barracks. I feel that this is a night for thoughts. Tomorrow I shall leave camp. For a few moments I think of the cheerful times in barracks.

Friedman, our hall commandant, is an optimist. I, of course, am a pessimist. Friedman's work group does work that the Nazis need; telegraphic utilities at the camp. They bring back bread, tuna fish, cigarettes, jam. The Nazis need their work.

About a month ago, I recall, there was no violence and no killing in the "Appeal Place". The stove didn't smoke. Even the wind died down and the shades stopped banging on the windows. Someone had replaced the broken window across from my bed. Friedman was happy. He composed a few satirical songs about camp and ghetto life. In a circle with four of his group, singers, he conducted his compositions. Everyone smiled, and we all joined in at the chorus. The atmosphere became warm, homelike.

I wanted to sleep, but the singing was lovely. The songs went on and on. After a time, they changed in character.

Friedman started a solo: "And you must never forget your mother———' His voice became deep, tearful. It drove out the mood of happiness. As I lay in bed, I saw my dear father and mother, and through the music, now turning sad and slow, I felt hot tears drip down my cheeks.

My heart ached as If I were in a wilderness, alone. IN A SNOW-STORM...

Friedman. I shall leave him and the singing and the camp. I lie in bed, thinking how the cheerful evening of song turned to sorrow.

Tomorrow, I have decided, will see me dead, or outside the concentration camp. My mind stirs. I am trying to rest, but I cannot rest. I should sleep. Tomorrow I shall need all my strength.

My mind stirs idly: I hear music, like that played by Flora on her violin; I hear singing like that of Friedman; I hear the soft, hushed voice of Lada; I hear Fredi warning me that escape is impossible. In this mood, I doze into troubled sleep, NOT FOR LONG.

IT WASN'T POSSIBLE TO PASS A NIGHT OF SOUND, HEALTHY SLEEP. THE NIGHT IN THAT PLACE IS BREATHING DEATH, JUST LIKE THE DAY. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THE MATTER OF LIGHT !--

ARE'NT WE ALLREADY ON THE CEMETERY?..

ALL YOU NEED IS TO MEET „THE EYES" OF THE „BOSS"— MOST OF THE TIME RED ON THE FACE & DRUNK... I NEVER SAW THIS MONSTER OR HIS 2 PARTNERS WITH A WOMAN. IN ALL PROBABILITY HE WOULD'NT LIKE A WOMAN TO SEE HIM KILLING OR TORTURING AN INMATE AT THE CAMP?--- AND THERE WERE WOMEN WHO WERCALLED „AUFSEHER" (WATCHMEN) WHO GAVE O THE OTHER WOMEN „BLACK EYES" IN THEIR MENTALITY THEY WERE „WORKING" TO GET MORE ATTENTION FROM THE „BOSS." BUT HE MADE BELIEVE THAT HE COULD'NT CARE LESS... A MONSTER IN A HUMAN BODY. OFTEN I THAUGHT THAT SOME OF THE NAZIS AROUND US WERE HOMOSEXUALS.

CHAPTER VIII

In the morning I share a crust of bread and some cigarettes with Hemio. He mentions that he has already prepared false papers. Since he looks like a Christian, blond, husky, he can travel by train to another city and hide there. He tells me to run away before it is too late.

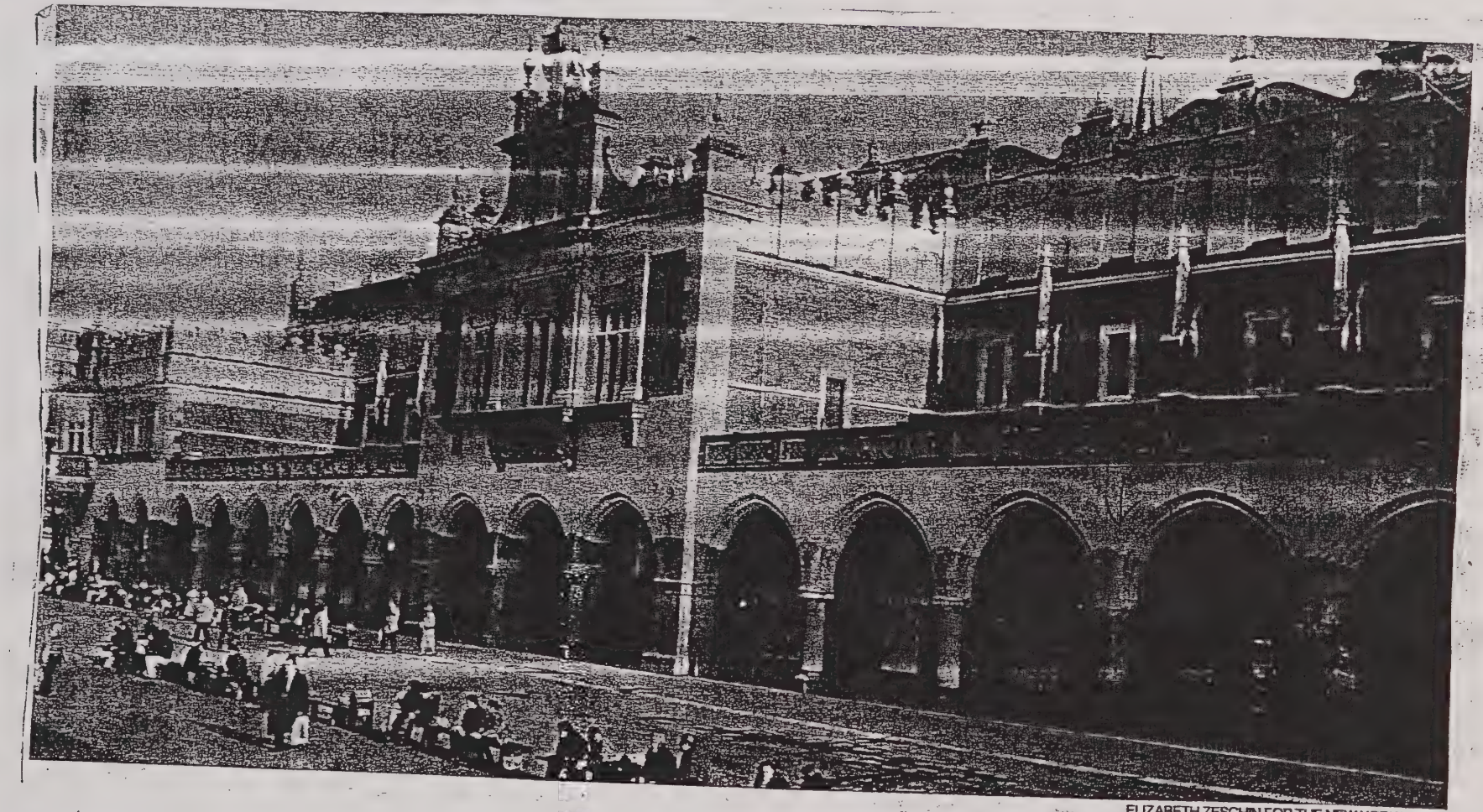
While he talks, my escape plan seems useless. I see myself caught somewhere in the city. I am not blond; I do not look like a Christian. I see myself caught. My friends will be killed for helping me. I will hang on the gallows, as an example to others. I rush out of barracks to Fredi.

He listens to my plan again: I will go out of camp with the GARBAGE truck driver who will hide me in a bag. I will look for Janda. Fredi says nothing. I return to barracks, and go out with the others.

It is eight o'clock. We are working near the "tower" at the far end of camp. We throw stones and "work" on the land. Suddenly, Hemio, on my left, moves to me quickly, whispers in my ear: "Listen, there is a ditch under the fence, right there. We can escape." I have my papers in my pocket. Hurry."

He does not wait for an answer. He rushes to take up a big hammer, pushes me to take another. We put them on our shoulders as if we are under orders to approach the tower for work.

In the next instant we are flat on our bellies, moving like snakes in the ditch. Once through, we take off our Star of David armbands and begin to climb the hill outside the camp. A small group of Polish workers are making air-raid shelters behind the first hill. They look at us, but they do not seem to care. THE FIRST DANGEROUS SURPRISE IS ALLREADY HERE ... WHAT WILL BE THE NEXT...?



ELIZABETH ZESCHIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

NATIONAL MUSEUM IN KRAKÓW-LOCATED ON MAIN SQUARE. ON THE STREET-LEVEL BEHIND THE ARCADES ARE VERY ELEGANT STORES. THE CENTER ENTRANCE IS A PASSAGE TO THE OTHER HALF OF THE SQUARE. IN THE BASEMENT ARE OFFICES.

One minute of freedom, and surprises begin. I catch my breath. We pass the Polish workers without incident. We are on our way; short cut to the city. Into my head comes a thought; freedom, how fine it is to be free! It is easy to breath, only fifty yards from the camp of death. I take a bread crust from my pocket and share it with Hemio. It tastes like cake.

Some time before,Fredi had given me the address of one of his friends, a worker in his office, a draftsman who lives near the outside of the city. We decide to stop at his home. Perhaps he will help us.

We knock at the door. Through a peep-hole, a woman looks at me. I mention Fredi's name; I mention her husband's name. No, her husband is not at home. She is afraid to open. It is dangerous. She is married only seven months; she is pregnant.

I beg her, "Please open. For even a few minutes. We must shave and wash. We shall leave immediately." I try to be gentle and polite. It is difficult, because our situation is desperate.

Slowly she opens the door to the living room. She is frightened as she looks at our shaved heads, our torn clothes, our dirty shoes. She leads us to the bathroom.

We bathe, shave. As we are ready to leave, we come into the dining room. The smell is of fine soup. Hot soup is on the table - for us! We eat, in silence, our first real meal in many days.

After we finish, I ask, "Could we hide under your beds in the bedroom, until evening. In the dark it will be easier to move in the streets."

She bites her lips nervously. "No, no. Absolutely no,. My husband tells me every morning as he leaves - open for no one."

Hemio talks a bit, but nothing helps. We have to go.

Outside the house I shake hands with Hemio. We have to separate. I have three miles to walk to Janda. Three miles. Hemio will go calmly to a train. I feel a surge of courage, a wave of despair, a feeling of love for my brother, a fear of death. God help me, I think. The words repeat in my mind: God help me.

I pray: "Sma Yisrael...Don't send a Jewish policeman or a Nazi spy like Mark on my road." I pray silently, as I move on.

On the Visla, alongside the river, two policemen pass me. I recognize one of them: Weiner. They are busy talking, gesticulating. I tremble, shake as with a convulsion, when I see them on the bridge. I must walk on the same sidewalk and must pass perhaps one yard from them. "Control yourself," I order my body. "Control yourself."

I do not look at the policemen. I walk at a reasonable pace, with a tremendous effort of will, until I am across the bridge. I dare not turn to look. I continue walking. There are no shouts, no outcry.

Soon I find myself on Volnica Place, Wavrzynca Street. On this street is the home of my grandparents. How I came this far I do not remember. But I order myself to keep going, to go on until I find Janda's barber shop. ON THE OTHER END OF SW. WAWRZYNCA STREET...

There it is: I go slowly upstairs to the third floor. I ring the bell, but I hear nothing. I hear nothing but my heart pounding. No one opens the door.

I go downstairs to the shop. In the mirror in the window, I see a wild-eyed creature. I am frightened for a moment. Then I realize that the mirror shows how I look. I am really frightened. With such an appearance, to walk down a "Juden-frei" - (Jew-free) - city, is virtual suicide. But suicide is better than suffering! PHILOSOPHISE...

Janda sees me while he is sharpening his razor. His face becomes long; his eyes close for a moment; his lips pull down at the corners; his left shoulder lifts nervously. He says something to his wife, a young brunette in a dead black dress and long earings like a gypsey. Again I go upstairs. This time I hear her steps behind me. She opens the door to let me in.

She says, "You have done well." She invites me into the neat little kitchen. Her face is sad and her big black eyes seem troubled.

It is just two o'clock. Their little boy is sleeping in his crib. It is wonderful to see a child asleep, peacefully.

The baby is aroused by a sharp ring at the doorbell. Who can it be? A policeman? I am almost frantic.

Mrs. Rose Janda remarks quietly, "In a home, there is usually a bell. It is nothing to hear a bell ring.

An elderly man comes in as she opens the door. I guess it is Janda's brother; they look alike. We are introduced. I do not hear a word. I see only that in his face is the same sad expression as that on the face of Mrs. Janda.

Again the bell rings. Who now? My heart pounds while I try to look calm. It is Janda himself. He has come up for dinner.

"You have done well," he says. We shake hands. I notice the same sad expression on his face. Why are all these people sad? I do not understand it.

Mrs. Rose Janda serves dinner. I get the place of honor at the table. I have forgotten how such a dinner can taste. We talk, eat, laugh. Janda brings some "Bimber" - that's what they call black-market - whiskey. We drink for luck. The whiskey tastes just like rubbing alcohol. I touch my lips to it. (I KNEW ALREADY THAT PEOPLE LOSE EYESIGHT FROM IT.)

From time to time Janda repeats: "You have done well." I begin to wonder, HIS FACE EXPRESSES ANOTHER THING...

After dinner we go to the living room. I see our old Viennese furniture that I sold to Janda a few months ago. I look at it, try to force my mind to create a picture of my own people sitting not so long ago on this living room furniture. There is no picture. In the silence I hear the clock tick. Time has moved relentlessly forward since June 6, 1942, WHEN MY PARENTS WERE MURDERED BY THE GERMANS.

The Janda family leaves, taking their little boy with them. They lock me in the apartment.

In the top drawer, I find my second violin. I brought it to Janda just before the disasters. There are books on the small book table, games, chess. I take out the violin. How sad it looks, how abandoned and lonesome. The strings hang loosly. The pegs have fallen out. The D string is broken.

I look in my string bag. Yes, I have a brand new D. I put the string on, tighten the pegs. I am deathly tired, but nothing can tear me away from my old violin, made by an unknown violin maker in Mittenwald. I set the violin in order.

Here in this quiet warm house I am afraid. From here - where shall I go? There is no place I call home. I tighten the strings gradually, watch the bridge so that it will not fall. I think of Fredi. Then I get the violin almost up to pitch. I tighten the bow, slide it up and down the rosin.

I take up the violin. In a moment, I am out of the troubles of this world. I am in the world of music. The first bold tones of the violin move me at once, as they have always moved me, into a friendly, familiar world; the world of music. WHAT A DEAR DIFFERENT WORLD!...

Later in the day, when they put the child in the crib, Janda asks me to play for Rose and himself. I am glad to play, but this time I am not lost in the music. I watch them carefully. Janda's face seems to have changed since this morning, as if a great emotional conflict has passed through him. What troubles can he have? Certainly, everyone has troubles these days, but Janda is a Polish Christian, a barber for many years. What troubles can he have? I try to push out of my mind my fears. I play operatic arias. The Jandas make the requests; I play for them. It is dull music to me - not music for the violin.

Mrs. Rose Janda shows me to bed saying, "Tonight you will sleep in your own bed." And it is my own - truly my "own"... It was once part of the bedroom furniture in my parents' home. Now I am a guest in my own bed. Perhaps I shall dream of home and my parents. But I fall into a heavy sleep from which I remember nothing.

In the morning, I rise early, shave, dress. I am worried about the expression on Janda's face. Who knows what it means? I tremble; I try to tell myself it is nothing.

We meet in the kitchen with a bright "Good morning" all around. I see Janda, in a great hurry, packing food, sandwiches, fruits. He is very busy, does not say a word after that first greeting. What is going on, I wonder.

The family leaves all together after they lock me in the bedroom with my old violin. I play violin hour after hour, trying to calm myself and forget...

At lunch time, Rose comes in smiling, her fat boy on her arm. She brings newspapers, magazines. She smiles very cordially. While I read, the little boy climbs up on my knees; a strange sensation - a child on my knees; HOW LOVELY, HOW LOVELY.

Delicious smells come from the kitchen. Soon we are eating - in silence. I feel that something will happen. I rarely make a mistake in such a matter. Something will happen.

As soon as the child is asleep in his crib, Mrs. Janda takes my hand gently and leads me from the living room to the kitchen. It is coming, I think. I am afraid.

"You see," she begins, "I would like you and even your brother to live with us, but alas, it is not possible. I am Jewish."

She bursts into tears. Then she resumes. "Every morning my husband goes to the ghetto door, and while my mother comes to the door, he gives a big tip to the Police doorman. That way mother gets a food package. I should be with her," SHE; POOR DARLING, SHE SUFFERS & I AM HERE IN A WARM COMFORTABLE HOME....
She sobs; she is in great pain.

I am thunderstruck. Nothing could have surprised me more. I never imagined she could be Jewish. I take her hand and lift it slowly to my lips. I try to ~~quiet~~ CALM her, BUT I AM NOT ABLE TO...

Now I understand everything; the hurry in the morning, Janda's nervousness. She tells me that her husband bought from a monk in his native town a set of papers that belonged to his dead sister. Rose took the sister's name, and lives here as his sister, in this apartment they rented a year and a half ago. She wears black, always black. She appears to be a widow. Her fictitious husband fell in the war; one must explain the child, IN CASE OF SOME KIND OF TROUBLE.

The day passes. My fears grow from hour to hour. An idea comes to my head: I wish I were six months older...

When Janda comes home in the evening he says only a few words, takes his child on his knees and caresses him. After the child goes to sleep in his crib, Janda tells me they expect trouble that night. Across the street is a college; the classrooms and halls are full of young Poles caught by Gestapo agents like Gorniak. These Poles are to be sent to Germany for slave labor. For weeks these poor people have been kept in dirty, crowded classrooms. They often try to escape; some try to jump from the windows of the fourth floor. The Gestapo, every once in a while, makes raids, investigations, in homes near the college, arresting innocent people on the pretext that they are helping the Poles imprisoned in the college. As Janda spreads this story in front of me, I see there is no alternative: I must leave. (SOMEHOW I DON'T BELIEVE THAT STORY)...

"I shave you nicely and make you a nice hair-cut," Janda says. Where is the hair for the hair-cut, I wonder. "And I walk you to the city," he continues. "I'm sure one of your friends will take you in."

I cannot think. Where can I go? Where can I go? Ever since Mrs. Rose Janda told me she is Jewish, I have thought of nothing else. I don't know the answer; I AM ON THE STREET; NO ROOF!

Next morning Janda carries out his program for me. We leave quietly. On the way he holds my arm to give me courage. But he asks several times, "Where do you want to go?" I have to tell him; it is necessary to go in one direction. We cannot stand in the street; I imagine everyone will notice.

In sheer desperation, I decide to go to the home of Professor Ada Rutkowska, the famous surgeon, a good friend of the family. Many times we played chamber music in her home. A year before the ghetto started, she suggested that I get a job as a furrier. A worker on furs, she thought, would be safer. Many times we played "patience" - a card game - in her home. I think of these things as we walk toward it, MY HEART POUNDS.

(X) SHE WAS ONE OF 3 SISTERS, ALL MARRIED TO PROMINENT MEN.

She is a converted Jewess. Her husband, Rutkowsky, is a Christian, surgeon at the University Medical School. She married him after the statesman, Marek, her first husband, died. THERE WERE THREE PRETTY JEWISH SISTERS WHO MARRIED 3 PROMINENT GENTILES.

The smell of spring comes from the parks as we walk to Dtuga Street 3, Rutkowska's house. At the doorway, Janda gives me my money; he has kept it safe in his home for many months while I was in the ghetto and concentration camp. He wishes me good luck; we kiss - and I go upstairs.

As I climb the stairs I realize how foolish I am. I wish the stairs would never end. I have no hair; my clothes are tattered rags; the cap on my head does not hide my lack of hair, nor does it hide my face, that of a hunted, persecuted being. I feel very much alone, COLD, SHAKING.

I ring the bell. In the little peep-hole opening I see a blue eye. It must be Cynthia, the second maid. I recognize her voice as she asks: "What can I do for you?" (IT'S A VERY SOPHISTICATED HOUSEHOLD.

Please open the door," I say, trying with a tremendous effort to make my voice pleasant and agreeable, I KNEW SUDDENLY THAT SHE WOULDN'T OPEN.

but Cynthia seems to have a set answer for people who ring bells. "Our people must use the back-stairs," (the courtyard stairs.) But I forgot - and now it is too late. "The professor is not home," Cynthia continues. "She is out of town." The peep-hole is closed. THE SOAPBUBBLE HAS CRACKED.

Where to go? Again I am faced with the problem. One mile from here is my last place of work, Smewska Street 19. Let me go there; the boss is a kind man. AN UKRAINIAN WHO "GOES WITH THE WIND"

Somehow I walk that mile unnoticed. As I open the door, the boss's brother, now the foreman, is leaving for lunch. He says "Hello" as I come in.

My boss looks at me as if I were my own ghost. "Jesus-Maria...Why do you go out? It is very dangerous," he whispers. HE DIDN'T EVEN DREAM THAT I ESCAPED FROM THE CONCENTRATION CAMP. HE IS NOW A "FRIEND" WITH THE NAZIS. THEY ARE GOOD CUSTOMERS...HE IS UKRINIAN

I explain quickly: "I escaped from the concentration camp. I want to stay in the factory until evening. Then I go to the forest to join the partisans." I WAS LYING OF COURSE, QUICKLY.

It is the first thing I can think of. I would be truly happy to join the partisans, but nobody knows exactly where they are in the forest, AND HOW FAR FROM KRAKOW. How could I get there, on road or train, the way I look now?

My boss sighs deeply and leaves me. His brother returns and sits at my side. I wonder if they will let me stay until evening. I know they will try to make me leave as quickly as possible.

I must do something - immediately. I walk slowly to the next room to "cook some black coffee for the road" on the stove that has served so well our Jewish workers only last week.

Suddenly, John, a cutter working near the window facing the courtyard, shouts, scaring me to death, "Alfred, you are lost. Policemen are coming for you. Look down there; they are asking the superintendent for the staircase to our factory." (WORK SHOP)

At that instant I lose all my power of thought. I am lost. I see a picture in front of my eyes, myself hanging and tortured, like my friend Lansberger and his wife, who escaped three days before me, and were brought back, beaten to death, and hanged with hands crossed on their backs.

I try to hide under a table. This is stupid; to hide under a table, out in the open, where anyone can see from any of the rooms. But I am in panic; I don't know what I am doing. Nobody wants to go near me; nobody wants to be accused of helping a "criminal"... John leaves his table, goes to the next room. I feel completely paralyzed under the table. I know I am exposed, but I can do nothing. It is a matter of seconds.

LAST QUARTET

If there are miracles, they happen at such a moment. The youngest of all, the floorboy, Edmond, dives under the table, pulls me out violently, shouts, "What are you doing here?" He pushes me into a corner where a heap of mouton skins are stacked for cutting. I fall down on the floor; he covers me with all the moutons...

I cannot breath. It is hot, dark, stifling. I hear the voices of the (JEWISH) policemen. They want to check something, and to take for themselves the small fur-cutting tools left in the shop by the Jewish workers, now confined in the concentration camp. I hear them talking about the camp; the furriers in the concentration camp will never use these tools again.

The policemen keep on talking. They are looking around to see what else they can take. It would be a great triumph for them to find me - an escaped prisoner from the concentration camp. All these Jewish policemen would be delighted to pounce on me. It would make them more secure, give them additional assurance that they are in the good graces of the Nazis. Now I see in front of my eyes the gallows, and hear the screams - mine - as I am dying.

Somehow, one moment follows another. I hold my breath, hope against hope. There are steps, talk, noise. NO AIR TO BREATHE...

It is a long time later when Edmond pushes aside the moutons to let me breath.

I see everyone standing pale, wide-eyed. John starts to talk, but the words get lost in his throat. My boss looks like a ghost. His voice is low and trembling as he says, "Alfred, what we passed through these five minutes...You have no idea."

I have no idea? What can I answer? I put on a serious face and tell them, "At night I leave for the forests. I go to join the partisans."

 POLISH CURRENCY

I take Edmond aside and push 100 zlotys into his hand. I always liked Edmond. I whisper in his ear, asking him to open at once the storage shed in the courtyard where coal and fur cuttings are stored. I tell him I must hide there for only three days. "You must do it for me," I insist, almost as if I have the right to give an order. "I have to wait for my brother. He is still in the camp." (THAT WAS TRUE.)

Edmond goes downstairs.

I shake hands with all the people in the shop, the boss and the Polish workers. I leave them with a heavy heart.

I slip down to the storage shed. Edmond locks me in. Again I am alone with my thoughts. It is black, total darkness: I try to find the case of cuttings, the fur they sell for waste or use for heat since they are usually short of coal. After a long time I find the fur cuttings, and lie down to sleep on them. From now on, I think, I had better not take off my clothes to sleep. I may have to run - quickly.

In the morning, Edmond comes to get coal, to put more fur cuttings into my home. I ask Edmond what day it is. He replies: March 20th... and the year 1943. I ask Edmond to get me some food, and to take a message to Janda; he is to ask Janda to go to the concentration camp at Plaszow and very carefully get a message to my brother. I wonder how I can help Fredi.

In the evening, Edmond comes again. He brings me bread, black coffee, writing paper. He tells me that Janda refused to go to the camp; it would be too dangerous for all of us.

Next morning I again send Edmond to Janda with money. Once he promised to get me and Fredi good automatic pistols like those the partisans use in the forest. He knows where they are sold; black market. If only I can get a pistol. To die then - to die fighting; not as a martyr.

At evening I am sick at heart. Edmond brings Janda's answer: "Chimneys do not smoke. I can do nothing now. Regards -J."

I continue to live in the shed. I live one day at a time. Edmond brings food; somehow I live, alone with black thoughts, with fears, in the darkness. I dare not stir from the shed.

My day begins with Edmond, coming to get coal and to deposit the fur cuttings. It ends when he brings food, and locks the shed. I think of fur cuttings, of fur, of the Baroness furs, in our family fur business. I think of the day of forced labor when she came toward me from a group of Polish pedestrians watching us on forced labor.

I recognized her instantly, the Baroness Z———(WILLING), an old friend of the family. She was young, about thirty, with a perfectly molded body. Her black hair, as usual, very sleek and shiny.

Two years earlier she came for a fitting to our family fur store. I suggested a special model my father and I designed. It was a successful transaction, because she asked me about a new fur cape, and even asked for advice about her hair style. My father was discreetly busy behind the curtain. The Baroness, so close to me that her hot breath made my ears tingle, asked me, "Alfred, you have such good taste, tell me what kind of haircut would be suitable for me." I attempted to discuss hair styles; the correct hair-cut for the young widow, the Baroness Z———. She said it would take some time to make that hair style; she would have to let her hair grow longer. The Baroness was very friendly. To my father, she spoke French. To me, English.

The distinguished Baroness Z——— came toward me when I worked as slave laborer, marked with the Star of David. This fine lady, in front of a crowd of curious Poles, smiled at me and asked, "How is your family?" It was a polite question.

Baroness Z——— did not realize that her question would loose a flood of memories. Not a sound came from my lips. I looked into her black eyes. In her I saw a woman who could have loved me. Her face became pale. She was confused, disappointed. In other circumstances, she would have fallen into my arms.

I touched her hand, kissed her long white fingers gently and said, "Goodbye"...The other slave laborers paused in their work. They saw the fine lady, heard the few words spoken. That was the last time I saw Baroness Z———.

I think of her now. Perhaps I can find her. I think of furs, the Baroness, and the fur cuttings that are my home. I think of the furs, the fur cuttings, waste-products.

I am back to reality again: I am in the shack with no company except coal and fur-cuttings, AND THEY HAVE A SHARP, DUSTY SCENT, WHICH I HAVE TO INHALE... I COULD SURVIVE THE WAR HERE IN PEACE, I WAS FANTASIZING, AND I KNEW IT WON'T HAPPEN I FELL ASLEEP. BLESSED, TIRED, WELL DESERVED SLEEP, WHICH SOMETIMES „SOLVES" ALL THE PROBLEMS. ———

C H A P T E R IX

A week drags by in this life among the fur cuttings. One afternoon I hear heavy steps like those of military boots and a medley of voices. I recognize two Germans speaking, my former boss and Edmond. While they talk I hear Edmond unlocking the door of the shed.

This is it, I think. What do they want here? It must be that Edmond, afraid for his own life, denounced me to the boss and they called the Gestapo and now they are coming to pick me up. I see myself hanging; I hear my screams as I am tortured. My mind is full of horrible black pictures and frightening sounds. To myself I say; this is it. Goodbye, my brother, Fredi. Goodbye.

I push deeper into the dirt, the cuttings, the rags, papers. I am almost suffocated, but I must wait. I try to listen to the talk. What can this be? I hear words like perfume, pork-fat, cigarettes.

The thought comes to me: black-market business. I am suddenly full of hope. The German soldiers bring big cartons of Polish cigarettes for a fantastically high price, and a moment later, a farmer brings flour and pork-fat. I listen to the business. The shed is the hiding place for black-market merchandise too.

I heave a deep breath as they leave. I am heartily glad to see them go. Now there are cigarettes and food in the shed, but I have enough trouble. There is no toilet in the shed. I am a human being. For my comfort, I must do very discretely what is necessary. I must hide from the boss any sign that I live in the shed. They must not find out. Not yet.

There is no water. The cold cuts through me. I am compelled to pay Edmond more and more money. He is the master of my life.

On a Saturday afternoon Edmond brings me the best news I ever heard. It is a message from Janda: my brother Fredi escaped from the concentration camp at Plaszow on Friday and came to Janda expecting to find me there. I am overjoyed. I am delirious with happiness. We are both free.

I tell Edmond to leave the padlock on the door, but not to lock it. Perhaps Sunday Fredi will join me here in the shed. I manage to lock myself in from the inside. I fall into my bed of dust and fur-cuttings, my bed for the past twelve days and nights, happy in the thought that soon there will be a new life for Fredi and me.

At the time the ghetto was first established our family devised a special kind of knock at the door: two quick knocks, a pause, then a single knock. This family knock was ours; it was our guarantee that the visitor was not bringing trouble. And this knock stays in my memory.

I sink into a troubled deep dream, that I am in our home in the ghetto with my parents and the whole family. There is our family knock at the door. "Who can it be?" everyone asks. "Perhaps Fredi," I say, and at that moment I hear a noise and am startled wide awake. The silence rings in my ears, but again I hear our family knock at the door. It must be, it can only be—— I rush to the tiny window. In the dark I see Fredi.

He is wearing the brown hat I left at Janda's. I swing the door open and lead him into the shed. We are together again.

We embrace and kiss. My first question: "How did you escape?"

"It is a long story," says Fredi. "Tomorrow, all the details. Now, let's go."

At this moment only do I realize our great danger. It is more difficult to find a place for two people. I am again afraid, WORRIED.

"Walk with a firm step," Fredi orders as we leave the shed.

As we close the door to the shed, Fredi whispers that we are on our way to the garage of his former boss. There in the garage, it may be possible to hide in one of the automobiles. A mere two and a half miles, he says, casually.

I follow Fredi at a distance of about 20 yards. The streets are dark, but familiar. We pass the main building of the University. We have perhaps 600 yards to go. We keep going.

Fredi leads the way through a doorway into the courtyard. We come close together, swing open the garage door, and close it again quickly after we are inside.

We climb into an automobile. It is cold again: 8 or 9 degrees below zero. Inside the garage it is just as cold as outside. I can see that it will be difficult to sleep in a small, ice-cold automobile, but I am happy to be with Fredi. At least we are under one roof- and safe for a little while.

The morning is sunny and mild, but I am deeply frozen. I am shaking with cold, a cold that is deep inside me. I have had no warm food for 13 days. I keep shaking, until Fredi thinks of something.

He tries a trick. At noon he goes "out" to the lady in the same building who cooks dinner for the draftsmen in the office. Fredi sits down and has a pleasant dinner. The lady doesn't ask where he has been the past two weeks. Fredi then asks for one dinner "to go out". She prepares it carefully - and Fredi brings it to me in the automobile.

LAST QUARTET

When I hear the story - and see the food - I explode into gales of wild laughter. Never in my life did I laugh at a dinner, but this time something happens to me.

I eat like an animal, seeing nothing, hearing nothing. I feel the wonderful, life-giving, mind reviving miracle of eating. I finish the soup, and I am still laughing. I finish the meat, and I am still laughing. I feel ashamed to laugh in front of Fredi. Slowly I subside. He lowers his eyes and says nothing. Who can understand better?

After the meal is finished, I come back to something like equilibrium. I demand that Fredi tell me about his escape. Fredi says there isn't much to tell, but it's a long story. I listen to it.

Fredi was sent with his work group to the ghetto to work on the streets and in the apartments, "cleaning-up" after the "transport". He worked with the group all day until almost dusk, PEOPLE TAKEN BY THE NAZIS FROM THEIR APARTMENTS LEFT ALL

Very slowly, he edged away from his group. When he saw his chance, he jumped quickly into a sewer. He knew very well that in this sewer well-known people had hidden in the bloody days. He knew that some of our friends too were caught inside the sewer and killed. But he jumped in, struggled until he closed the cover on top, and in total darkness, unspeakable filth and water, began to plan his escape from the ghetto.

Fredi had studied the sewer-network of our city in his work as an architect. He had a candle and matches in his pocket; in his mind he had a detailed plan for escape.

Fredi walked an endless distance, then tried to find out where he was. The matches were soaking wet; the candle useless. By this time the filth and water were up to his knees. In spite of his knowledge of the sewer system, he was completely lost. He kept going, hoping to see a light from the top, HE THOUGHT THAT THAT WAS HIS DESTINY: TO DIE IN A SEWER! AND I WILL NEVER KNOW

It must have been very late at night when his legs refused to go further. Fredi lay down in a place where the water was only three inches deep. Thus he spent a few hours, his eyes closed, dozing from time to time, on this his first night of freedom.

When he awoke, he was trembling, hungry and soaking wet. He began to walk. At the first sign of light, he moved toward the street level, trying to find a manhole cover. He found one - but it was almost impossible to lift it. Fredi knew that the covers weigh many pounds. But he had forgotten that from the bottom it is extremely difficult to lift the cover.

As he struggled with the cover, he heard a German shout: "A bandit - catch him!"

Fredi knew that partisans are always called bandits by the Nazis. He was afraid; but the Nazi was no hero. The Nazi shouted, but did not go near the manhole cover; partisans are dangerous, THEY CARRY GRENADES AND DON'T HESITATE TO DO ANYTHING FOR SURVIVAL... Fredi dropped the cover. In extreme panic he plunged back into the sewer's filth and water, trying to get away from that place.

He ran, walked, stumbled, gasped his way through seemingly endless miles of sewers. Again, almost exhausted, he looked for a manhole cover. Painfully, slowly, he forced it open.

He found himself in a distant part of the city, on the other side of the river. How he got there he could not understand. But he gulped in the blessed air, tried to arrange his ragged clothing.

A young girl, walking past the river boulevard, spoke to him, "Didn't you escape from the Nazis?" she asked in a soft voice. "I could give water and a brush, and you could wash yourself in my home." ANOTHER MIRACLE ANOTHER HUMAN PERSON...

Fredi followed her silently. In her home he cleaned himself up and dried his clothes. He left her home just as soon as he could.

At this point in Fredi's story he took time to bring me up to date about our former maid, Lada. It seems that her life was getting too complicated. Gorniak's wife became jealous. And Gorniak's 18 year-old son began to make love to Lada. It was a difficult situation; two lovers and a jealous wife in one household. Lada gave up; she was not able to cope with the situation. She took a tiny apartment for herself in one of the suburbs. Always concerned about our family, Lada sent a message to Janda, giving her new address. Fortunately, all this happened before Fredi was taken to the concentration camp. Fredi was in contact with Janda, the center of all information for our family. Thus, Fredi knew where to find Lada - and he set out to look for her.

It was late at night, in air-raid drill darkness, in the unfamiliar suburb, before Fredi found the house. Gently, he knocked our family knock: two, then one. Lada was delighted to see him. After a generous drink, Fredi felt stronger. He was with an old friend.

An embarrassing situation arose. Lada opened her big blue eyes very wide. "Mr. Fredi," she said, "I am very sorry, but I have only one bed, and you are so tired, and after two nights in water in the sewer, I would never allow you to sleep on the chair. If you don't mind, we'll sleep in the same bed. Tomorrow you will be rested, and able to go on."

Fredi had to accept this hospitality. He was resigned to it - and fell promptly into a deep sleep.

But the night was not quiet. Someone was trying to open the window. They awoke, with wild excitement. It was Lada's fiancee, her latest boy friend. "Don't move," she told Fredi. In fact Fredi was too frightened to move. Lada want to the window.

"Please leave me alone," she said. "My brother escaped from the forced labor camp for Polish people and he has to rest. Don't come in, please." NOT TONIGHT, DEAR "TOMORROW IS ANOTHER DAY.

The young man was agressive. He wanted to climb into the room. He wanted to see the "brother". Lada pushed him away gently, but with all the strength in her arms. "You want to make me angry," she said. "You make me angry, and you'll remember it."

After more talk, and some less gentle pushing, he gave up. Lada closed the window. Fredi dropped back into the deep sleep of exhaustion.

Fredi's story is finished quickly. He left Lada, went to Janda. From Janda he received the same hospitality I had received. At this time Fredi was also an escaped "criminal" from the concentration camp; also a potential danger." Fredi asked where I was. Janda told him and Fredi joined me at Strewska Street 19, in the storage shed.

Now that we are together, now that I have eaten and laughed, we must find a good hiding place, a "bunker" as we call it. We cannot stay in this automobile and in this garage. If we are discovered, it will bring great trouble to Fredi's former boss, the head of the engineering firm. We must leave -soon.

We sit in silence. After a time, Fredi says, "Perhaps one of the delivery men, in the nearest village. He seems to love money very much." I do not know what to say. "Perhaps he will take you, and I will find another delivery man," FOR MYSELF?

Fredi goes out, to explore the possibilities. I look like a Jew; he does not. Always, Fredi is the one to go into danger. It is just something that has to be done, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS...

I stay on the cold car cushion, push myself into a corner, trying to conserve the heat in my body. I think I shall survive. If only Fredi

brings good news. I think of the miraculous human body that survives horrible food, irregular fearful sleep, and extreme anxiety. Somehow, I feel I shall survive, I BEGIN TO FOOL MYSELF..

At daybreak, Fredi is back. With him he brings a lad, Tony, son of Mr. Malik, one of the delivery men. They come in a delivery wagon pulled by a pleasant white and brown horse, THEY USED TO DELIVER BRICKS,

Tony is a cheerful chap. I suggest changing clothes with him; in farm clothing I shall be a little safer. He says, "OK." and changes clothes with me, almost carelessly.

I take a seat on Tony's right. Fredi waves us goodbye. He will take a trolley to a friend of his who will hide him, in secret, in the attic.

Tony and I move uptown as the horse trots gayly along. The wagon bounces me around, but it is better than walking. The wagon passes through the city, through streets crowded with people, past Nazis, past Gestapo agents, past a host of dangers. We move steadily toward the country. SIZE.

Tony talks continuously. I give money to him; he enjoys taking it. His family has a farm in the first village in the western corner of our town of Krakow. It is a long jolting ride.

It is already twilight when we get to the house. I am glad it is getting dark. It will be a miracle if I get into the house without being seen by inquisitive neighbors, VILLAGERS ARE CURIOUS PEOPLE

I am encouraged by our ride. No one has noticed us in the crowded streets. Tony is gay, THE MONEY MADE HIM HAPPY.

We drive right into the stable, where the horse, the cow and some goats live. I try to fill my lungs with country air, but the smells come instead. A few moments later, I meet Mr. Malik, Tony's father.

Tony introduces me. Malik is startled; his face contorts with fear. I realize abruptly that Tony made this deal himself, that he did not tell his father about it.

Tony takes out a chunk of dark country bread. He sits on the hay to eat it. Malik, after his first shock of surprise, goes back to the house.

He returns with a big piece of bread for me . He sees Tony eating. "You eat," he says. "How many times have I told you that the animals are always first to eat?" He throws hay to the horse. "Look," he says. "The horse is laughing at the food."

The horse does seem to laugh. But I myself laughed at my dinner - the unexpected dinner Fredi brought me, HOW TRUE IT IS: EATING IS SO IMPORTANT...

Tony explains my situation, asking permission to hide me for three days. Malik covers his face with his hands, tries to understand the danger I have brought him. After a while he takes me to the attic. There are fresh hay, tools and grain up in the attic. I fall in the hay and begin to doze. Mrs. Malik wakes me. She brings food.

A big plate of country soup; hot soup. I eat gratefully. Then I fall back in the hay, thinking of Fredi, hoping he will be safe.

At night snow falls on my face through holes in the roof and a howling wind blows cold on my head. Many times during the night I am awake: sudden noises.

It is some time before I understand why Malik is worried. We are in the country, but we are only fifty yards from an airport. In case of suspected sabotage, we are indeed in danger.

A few nights later I am aroused from sleep by the noise of sirens and barking police dogs. The next day I hear that a Gestapo guard found the body of a Nazi soldier in a clump of trees on the far side of the airport.

The Nazis posted a notice on the trees: "For each dead German, 50 Poles will be taken prisoner, or 10 will be condemned to 'transport'."

Malik becomes uneasy. I pay him a large sum, but he seems only half-satisfied. However, he goes back to his delivery work, with his son, the wagon, and the horse. DEAR LITTLE HORSE. IT DOESN'T KNOW OF TROUBLE..

Two weeks pass before I get a message from Fredi. The Maliks say he is safe in the attic of his foreman friend. It is in the opposite corner of the city. No one knows he is there except his friend and the Maliks. NO ONE MUST KNOW !!!

On the farm, the first sign of Easter is the slaughter of two kids, small, harmless goats. The parents of the goats cry like human beings, looking aimlessly, hopelessly for their kids.

I have slept in this attic for almost two weeks, day after day, with small interruptions to take care of personal needs and to eat. I sleep, covered with hay, for warmth. Above my bed, a big chunk of bread is drying. It is better for me and my still somewhat sick liver, if bread is dried for a few days. (FORGET BUTTER OR EGGS OR MILK.)

In fine weather, I take off one of the stone shingles of the roof, so that I have a window on the world. From this opening, I can see the sunshine, blossoms appearing, airplanes coming to and from the airport, and in the evening, the stars and moon in the sky. So far I have been too unhappy, too tense to read anything. The Malik's bring me magazines and newspapers. Soon the Easter holidays will be here. I think of the Passover season, and our family seders, the ceremonial suppers we shall never have again with my parents.

Tony comes up to talk. There is news: startling news. In the Warsaw ghetto, Jews have obtained guns. Some weapons were bought from Nazis, some came from the partisans and the resistance movement. The ghetto people are fighting like the desperate people they are.

The odds are a thousand to one. The Nazis are using bombing planes and gas on the ghetto. The ghetto resistance is heroic - heroic suicide. And the world looks on - in silence. MANY OF MY FRIENDS ARE THERE FIGHTING. I ENVY THEM IN A WAY...

This night a wedding is held in the neighbor's cottage. A country band plays the music. I hear them, the soloist conductor, the two or three melodies they know. They play primitive melodies on instruments made by village instrument makers. But there is something exciting about the music; it gets into your blood as it mounts in a furious crescendo. Thin folk melodies, perhaps, no instrumentation, perhaps. But it is active music- and it beats a rhythm in my heart.

The people at the wedding are dancing and drinking and singing. I am alone in the hay.

Easter Sunday dawns in a beautiful warm day. I lie in the straw, looking through my opening in the roof at the clear blue sky. Suddenly, footsteps coming up. My heart pounds. Who again? What now?

It is fantastic - but it is true. There is Tony, leading in my brother, Fredi. I DON'T BELIEVE MY EYES.

This is one of the happiest days of my life, I think. "Now we stay together forever," I say in my excitement and surprise. Fredi explains. He had to leave instantly. He was up there in the attic of his friends home, lying down, but he could not stay forever flat on his back. Just at the moment he decided to stretch his legs, the wife heard him. "Bandits! Bandits!"she screamed. "Who is walking up there?"

Her husband, poor fellow, had to blurt out the truth. She had only one answer: "It is dangerous. He must leave." And because of the wife's fear, Fredi had to leave immediately.

I listen to Fredi's story. We talk quietly hour after hour. But in the afternoon, Malik, his wife and Tony come to see us. I don't like so much company. I remember what happened with Janda and his wife. When they finish their visit, Malik stays a moment longer, explains politely that the money we pay him, of our last cash, is good, but his mother-in-law has heard my footsteps, and if there is an argument with her, it may lead to danger. In any event, he says, we have to leave in a few weeks, when the wheat grows higher. He shows us the meadows. . . . "You'll go to the forest," he concludes, and goes down to his family.

Fredi and I sit down to talk over the situation. Where to go? Where can we go? The same question again. We stretch out in the hay and try to think. In front of my eyes pass the faces of all my Christian-Polish friends. I give Fredi all the information I have: the address of my tennis-racket maker; my violin repairman; my accordionist; my good friend, Boleslaw, the pianist; Kasimir, a lawyer and an excellent accordionist; and finally, Father Henry. To keep alive, I would try to live with him. My brother is very skeptical, but he takes down all the addresses.

In the morning, he borrows a bicycle from Tony and goes out. If he can find a place for me—— I swear to myself that if anything happens to Fredi I shall cut my veins. Without Fredi there is no life. I lie in the straw in a wide-awake lethargy, waiting for the slightest noise, listening, hoping, expecting Fredi to come back.

Two days move past, like centuries, while I wait. Fredi comes in pale, terribly tired, blue shadows under his eyes, his face troubled. Fredi has visited all our good friends. All of them. He gives me the detailed, painful report.

The violin maker, Jan Chamot, who made my best violin, now hidden in Professor Choplinski's home - he cannot shelter even one of us. He is married, has only one room. The toilet is in the courtyard; that is dangerous; AGAIN THE RESTROOM PROBLEM ...

Professor Choplinski has trouble enough with the radio hidden in his stove. In his home are museum treasures of inestimable value. The place is not for me. It would be dangerous to everyone.

Kasimir is eliminated too. His father, a postmaster, has been accused of losing an "important" letter. He was taken to Germany. The house is not safe.

Boleslaw does not live at home. It seems Boleslaw fell in love with a blonde beauty and caught a venereal disease from her. His wife turned him out of the house. The ex-sergeant plays accordion in a small dance band in a dirty night club. Fredi finds him - drunk. At the mention of my name, Boleslaw becomes sober. He remembers that I helped him buy old Friedman's piano for his son. But he can do nothing for me.

The tennis-racket maker recalls my fine rackets, the best gut, the best price. But he lives in a tiny basement in the church courtyard. In addition he is now an invalid, and needs care himself. He cannot help.

Father Henry occupies a pleasant room on the first floor, but he lives with a couple of his "boys". That isn't the important thing. The important thing is that the toilet is in the courtyard - and that is too dangerous.

Fredi went from one to the other. Finally, at Lada's suggestion, he went to see one of her friends. He talked for many weary hours before they agreed to shelter us. It isn't too secure. But we have no choice. We must move out.

C H A P T E R X

We make our preparations early the next morning. I am to be wrapped in a bag, put in the bottom of the wagon. Malik, Tony and Fredi try to help. I start to slide into the bag, but Malik says, "I don't want you wrapped in a bag! Somebody might ask what we have. It is better if you sit in the driver's seat with Tony." I think to myself this peasant knows more than I do about such things. A bag is suspicious; a farmer, not. I change clothes with Tony and climb up on the wagon. I breathe a long goodbye to the country and its brief hospitality. Goodbye to country air, cows mooing, cats howling, goats bleating, pigs grunting, the old pump complaining in the courtyard, the airport sounds. Goodbye to my tiny opening in the roof. Goodbye to hay. Goodbye too to hot soup, smoking hot and fresh as the sunrise. We start the wagon.

Fredi takes a taxi. His hair wasn't cut as short as mine. His eyes are blue. He always passes for a Pole. He can move with less danger. We cannot all go in the wagon.

Tony delivers me to Mr. Adam Lorenc. He is playing cards with his children, a boy of 10 and a boy of 13. They are making a great noise when we come in. They are screaming and gesticulating. The father is pounding on the table. A huge police dog is barking wildly to help the confusion.

Lorenc's wife orders the dog: "Under the bed." She leads me to the next room. There is Fredi, waiting. He had no trouble getting here. Fredi tells me we have a home; we will sit on a suitcase in the dark corner behind the half door opening from the kitchen to that room. I look at Fredi.

The dog is not content under the bed. He scratches, whines, sniffs,

His eyes shine with green phosphorescence as he puts his head out. I am not sure of the dog. Fredi says it will be all right, that the place will be all right.

I find out that Adam Lorenc drinks too much, especially on Friday, pay-day, and the day he collects money from us. He works as a mason. Ordinarily he is quiet. But on Friday he comes home late, his red face blazing, his eyes shining, and foam on his lips. I don't like Adam very much. But there is no choice. We are happy to find even this shelter.

Friday night comes to us in loud laughter or in dead, quiet silence. It all depends on what Adam Lorenc had to drink. He is affected by the quality of the liquor, or perhaps the quantity. When he is gay and laughing, his two boys jump around begging for coins. Everyone is happy. But when Mr. Lorenc is sad, no one looks at him. Only his wife, Tosia, can come near him. She is tall, friendly, a still pretty woman of perhaps 26, with limpid brown eyes, long black hair and a finely modeled face that looks like the calm face of a classic Greek statue. She is very quiet. In front of Fredi and I she is ashamed of her drunken husband. Her face seems to say, "You will get used to it," but she says not a word about her husband. I BECAME RATHER CAUTIOUS TALKING TO HIM, BUT NOT CAUTIOUS ENOUGH AS I LATER FOUND OUT...

The toilet problem is now of the utmost importance. For the first time in my life I am faced with such a problem. We spend the first weeks in acute misery; the family does not seem to understand, simply does not think of it. We are so grateful to find shelter, that we dare not talk for fear of annoying our "landlords"... After dark, at six in the evening, we go out, very carefully, to the toilet in the courtyard. I cannot stand this regime. I must find a solution, BUT IT IS HARD TO, SO HARD... NO ONE OUTSIDE MUST SEE MY FACE...

One day Mrs. Tosia Lorenc brings a rabbit. We wonder where the rabbit is kept. "In the rabbit house," says Tosia. A rabbit house? An idea comes into my head. I will look at this rabbit house some evening. I take the key to the rabbit house without anyone noticing.

The next evening I go visit the rabbit house. The rabbits smell me and go scurrying from place to place. I feel my way in the darkness. I find a pile of coal, a stack of wood, all sorts of old junk and two big cages with rabbits, all blanketed with a horrible odor. I go back to the house to get Fredi.

Our blankets and pillows are already spread out on the floor. The Lorenc family has only two beds; the boys sleep in one; they sleep in the other. I whisper to Fredi to look at the rabbit house. He goes out.

He returns disgusted. It is not possible to live there more than an hour. The smell is unbearable. It is cold, dark and the room is only five feet square. It is made for rabbits and to store coal and wood. Not for humans.

A few days later, on his way back from town w here he sold some of our clothing to get money to pay Mr. Lorenc, Fredi runs into a friend who gives him the name of a Polish Countess (8) who is very kind to Jews. Fredi rushes over to see the Countess. She explains that it is dangerous, but, of course, if we pay enough it can be arranged. I am to be a companion to a mentally disturbed aunt who gives fantastic orders and hides money in her bed. I am also to play violin for the Countess because she once played piano and loves music. I am also to teach music to her 19 year old niece. Together with me, they will all go to their country "chateau". It sounds like an idea, TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE...

(8) COUNTESS: Potocka

That night Fredi does not come home. He mails me a letter explaining all these things. He tells me in the letter that he has returned to his friend's attic; the inquisitive wife has gone away for a two week vacation.

I re-read Fredi's letter. Here is an answer, I think. I get so excited I cannot remain in one place. I must go and see. If I can go to the Countess, live like an ordinary person...It is a dream. I must go. It is a two mile walk through "pure" streets. My trip may bring me to the gallows.

Next morning, I make-up my face. I dare not go out pale, wild-eyed, looking like a fugitive. I put on dark face powder, some lipstick, a neat hat, my last suit and an overcoat. I take a horse-drawn street-cab. It is safer than walking. It is safer than taxis. The Gestapo likes to stop taxis. I am on my way to the Countess.

A well-dressed chambermaid opens in reply to my ring. I take an old visiting card from my wallet and give it to the girl. "To my lady, the Countess, if you please." The maid offers me a chair. I sit and study the hall, furnished in ornate Louis XIV style in black oak encrusted with mother-of-pearl.

A young girl, probably to be my pupil, comes in and extends her white hand to me. I take a chance, lift it to my lips and place a discreet kiss on it. The girl is totally confused, forgets even to speak for a while. Then she leads me to the Countess.

The old lady is sitting in bed, a pink gown around her. She shakes hands with me. She seems to be paralyzed, but she transfixes me with a stare through her pince-nez spectacles. "Sit down, sir," she says.

The young girl is on my left. I notice from a glance in the mirror that she is looking at me intently. The Countess says something about my mustache. "Shave the mustache, shave it," she says.

"Oh, no," explains the girl involuntarily.

The Countess asks me to turn around so she can see my profile.

"Yes," she says. "He has a southern profile, a Jewish profile."

That is the trouble.

"I will let you know by mail," says the Countess. Once more my eyes meet those of the young girl. Her eyes are bright and shining as we shake hands in farewell.

I return to the Lorenc house, to live on the suitcase in back of the open door, to wait for a reply. It does not come. The days lengthen into weeks. I continue to suffer, but no word comes from the Countess.

In my desperation and idleness, I think I shall write music. But when I take up paper and pencil, a terrible sadness and sudden fear take over my soul. All my creativeness is gone. In music school I was the one who had a "creative spark". Spark indeed; I have nothing. I can do nothing. I find a book of plays by Moliere, evidently left in a drawer by an earlier guest. I cannot read - not now.

In the evening I again look at the rabbit house, trying to find an answer to my suffering. The toilet problem is worse and worse. I feel that my nerves are tightening, tightening to the breaking point because of this, MY INTERIOR BECOMES UPSET.

One Sunday afternoon, the Lorenc family has guests in the kitchen. There are whispers: I imagine that the visitors must be Jews, looking for a place to hide. I am uneasy. More people; more trouble. I am afraid! WORRIED FOR ALL OF US --- HOW GLAD I AM AGAIN NOT HAVING MARRIED IRENE.

The next afternoon a young, black-haired girl of 17 or 18 comes timidly into the room, and sits at the table to read a book. Tosia Lorenc introduces us. Her name is Genia. She stays for the night, sleeping on an improvised bed like mine, in the kitchen on the floor. She doesn't say a word in three days; she reads and writes. Perhaps she is writing a diary. I learn that she finished college just before the war began. Her parents were lost, a sister is hidden elsewhere, and a widowed aunt and a three-year old daughter are hidden somewhere else.

Talk would do us both good. But even this is denied us. We are so AMBarrassed, so nervous about the toilet problem, that even talk is IMPossible.

On Sunday, Tosia Lorenc is expecting guests. Genia and I have to hide behind a big mirror that stands in the corner of the room. The guests and the Lorenc family will play cards in the kitchen, but someone may come into this room. We must hide behind the mirror, so that no one will see us.

We go behind the mirror. It is set at an angle across the corner, so we can squeeze behind it in the actual corner of the room. We are so close together that I am very much embarrassed. We sit on the floor behind the mirror. How long will they play cards? How long must we stay here?

Inside they sing, drink, talk, act like ordinary happy people. We listen to them, lose for a brief moment our immediate trouble.

I am on the floor, in a corner behind the mirror with this girl; electrically we represent two plus charges; our suffering is increasing.

I close my eyes. She closes hers too. After a long while, two of the guests come close to the mirror. They are just married. For them it is difficult to spend so much time without kissing and making love. They leave the card game on a pretext and come to the mirror to explore

one another's hungry arms and lips.

Genia opens her sad black eyes and looks intently into my eyes. Does she think the same thoughts that I have in my mind?

It is late at night before the big dog under the bed begins to scratch from hunger. The guests decide to leave. I hear them talk; it is midnight.

I decide to move into the rabbit house the next day. Nothing, no force on earth, will keep me any longer in that corner of the room, trembling at each moment that passes, being so terrifyingly near a girl, THINKING MOST OF THE TIME ABOUT THE REST-ROOM... IT BECAME A FRIGTENING FACTOR, LEADING TO VERY UNUSUAL SITUATIONS... / HUMILIATING, EMBARASSING SITUATIONS, AND NOTHING CAN BE DONE --- THE HUMAN BODY IS A LIVING THING, IT HAS ITS NEEDS, DESIRES... HOW SAD IT IS TO US TO GET USED TO THAT KIND OF LIVING...

—O—

LAST QUARTET

It is dark in the rabbit house. The stench is overpowering. I have sixteen rabbits for company. All is silent. Here I can think without interruption. My first thoughts are of the endless procession of the dead; my parents, my friends, my relatives and the nameless others. Somewhere in the procession, somewhere am I. For this, the Twentieth Century. For this, German Kultur, German "civilization", German "efficiency". To create this inferno on earth, to make this endless procession of the dead and the dying and those soon to die.

What have I to lose? What has anyone? Are we not all lost?

I am well rid of close contact with the Lorenc family. I remember the poker games, with the boys and Mr. Adam Lorenc playing against me and always, always winning. I have to keep my eyes closed; even the obvious swindle can not be averted. The same thing happened at the Malik household. I am practically forced to play poker. And I always lose. It is not cheating at cards; it is a special form of blackmail. I lose more money than I can afford. Soon I will have to sell my violin to get money. I NEVER EVEN GAVE A THOUGT TO IT. THAT THOUGHT I DIDNT DARE TO LET INTO MY MIND...

Inside the rabbit house, at the left, one on top of the other, are three big cages full of rabbits. I sit on a board on top of a heap of coal. Further up there is a case full of female rabbits, pregnant and separated from the males. I watch the rabbits; they are now my friends. At least they will not cheat me at poker, I LOVE ANIMALS. THEY DONOT ORGANIZE TO KILL JEWS

Every night, the youngest boy, Marion picks me up at midnight and I go to sleep on the floor of the room inside the house, as before. It is cold now. The wind blows through the holes of the rabbit house. At night it is down to 10 or 12 degress below zero. THE RABBITS SIT CLOSE TO ONE OTHER TO KEEP WARM. THE BIG FEMALE WAS PREPARING A BED FOR THE OFFSPRING STILL IN HER BELLY: SHE KEPT ON PLUCKING SOFT DOWN FROM HER CRUTCH AND LIKE AN ARCHITECT SLOWLY BUILDING THE „NEST". A FEW DAYS LATER THE TINY CREATURES CAME OUT TO THE WORLD, THE STRONGER SCRAMBLED FASTER TO THE

One day I look more closely at the rabbit house. It is attached to a large rabbit house next to it, outside the Lorenc land. Marion, who knows everything, tells me that this adjoining rabbit house belongs to a Ukranian named Pitela. I have to be careful, because Pitela is known as a Nazi sympathizer. I should not sneeze, cough, move around or make noise.

In the daytime, I go exploring inside the rabbit house where I live. About eight feet above the floor there is a ceiling. I notice a small opening in that ceiling. This is all I need. I pull myself up and I find myself just under the courtyard balcony that forms the roof of the rabbit house. In the gloom, I discover a broken down couch. Someone must have lived here. Perhaps that someone went to get money in town, got caught and never came back. HOW SAD IT IS TO TAKE THEIR PLACE ... I PROBABLY WILL BE THE NEXT

I make plans quickly. Now I will stay here, in this top-floor unit, above the rabbits, and we shall not move from here except to sell a suit or a shirt. My silk shirts bring a good price. Even high-class stores in Lukiennice buy them. And we need money. We always need money. WE DON'T MAKE MONEY, WE ONLY SPEND...

I look at the place again. I begin to clean it up. But the smell; no one can do anything about the smell. I send a message to Fredi asking him to join me. If we are the last of our family, and we are, let us at least stay together. It will be more pleasant. JUST HAVE HIM CLOSE TO ME GIVES ME A BLESSED FEELING...

The following Sunday, at noon, Fredi arrives. It is a great day. My message reached him just in time. WHERE HE WAS HIDING A neighbor heard Fredi sneeze one night and ran to the owner, shouting, "Bandits are certainly in the attic. Hurry up. Call the police."

Fortunately, engineers are quiet people. Fredi's friend was cold, calm and quieted the woman quickly. But once suspicion was aroused, Fredi had to leave. THERE WAS SOME RISK AND WE COULDN'T RUN ANY RISK...

LAST QUARTET

We can live in this top-floor of the rabbit house. If we are lucky and pay Lorenc enough we can stay until the "liberation"... That is a vague dream. The situation at the front is not clear. We read in the newspapers about the death of Polish General Sikorski under mysterious circumstances in a foreign land. The Russians sit at the Kuban bridge-head, waiting. They have time. The Germans are deep in the eastern snows. Nazi propaganda proclaims: "With a good field glass, we can see the towers of Moscow."— We wait for "liberation"— when will it come? Must we die first?

Inside our top-floor of the rabbit house, the heavy odor hangs like the smell of decayed onions. I doubt if I can stand it for any length of time. But at least we have personal freedom. There is no toilet problem. Fredi is with me. We are close to one another. Our home is five feet square and about four feet high. We can kneel, lie down or sit on the floor. We don't have to stand up. WE COULDN'T EVEN DO THAT.

In the wall facing the courtyard and the neighbor's rabbit house attached to ours, is a small window, a square covered with black paper. It is about four inches square. In the evening, when there is no sound in the courtyard, we can look outside, using one eye, either right or left. The window is small; the view of the courtyard is hardly inspiring. But I feel happy, even in this stench, for the first time in months. IT SEEMS TO ME A RELATIVELY SAFE PLACE

A few weeks later, there is noise in the bottom, or ground-floor of the rabbit house. We have covered the opening to our top-floor carefully, but we hear voices. Tosia Lorenc and her two sons, in a great hurry, are making space for new "guests", perhaps Genia's relative, Anna. Indeed, a moment later, they lead in a girl and bring a chair for her, setting it up in the coal. They lock the rabbit house. We are in silence, complete and absolute. Now there are three people in the rabbit house and Genia in the corner of

Christmas is coming again. We give Adam Lorenc Christmas tips, and that has a certain effect. They bring us a bottle of whiskey mixed with juice, and traditional Christmas dishes. Tosia Lorenc is really an artist in cooking, but only when her husband doesn't spend everything on drink or gambling, AND HE WORKS SO HARD. . .

The situation changes. Two more people arrive: Genia's aunt Rose, and her three year-old dauthter. They accept all of Mr. Lorenc's conditions; they have no choice. For eight months they lived in a bunker, lying on the ground, all four of them, under a staircase in a dark corner. Their "host" was kind. He arranged a tiny window in the wall facing the courtyard. The girls could look outside once in a while, taking turns. One morning the superintendent noticed a human eye in the opening in the wall. He came shouting that it was necessary to clean up the space under the stairs. They had to leave at once.

They are here. It is impossible for a human being to live in the cold dirty bottom of the rabbit house. Tosia Lorenc calls on my brother, always an architect, to arrange the tiny cellar in the middle of the central courtyard where they keep potatoes and other black market items. At night, Adam Lorenc and the boys and Fredi very carefully take shovels, wood for supports, and followed by the dog, go down to build a bunker for the girls.

After four hours of hard work, the bunker is ready to receive the "victims". They are not victims yet, but at any time, within fresh air or light, they can be victims in that bunker.

Two hard cold months pass. Several times Fredi has to go downtown to sell shirts, shoes. We decide to sell my last violin. My old violin, left at Janda's house, was sold long ago to Professor Choplinski at a give-away price. Now it is my last violin, the one made especially for me by the Polish violin maker, Jan Chamot, who worked in Cremona and Dresden; WHAT A NICE MAN; IN A ONE ROOM APARTMENT HE MAKES VIOLINS, LIVES, COOKS AND IS A HAPPY MAN. I SAW HIM -97- MAKING MY VIOLIN. WHAT A SKILLED, HARD WORKER AND ARTIST HE

That violin is in the home of Professor Choplinski. Perhaps he will buy it at a reasonable price.

Fredi goes to town. I pass a miserable day, knowing that Fredi must go through the "clean" city all the way to the professor's home. I can hardly eat, waiting for Fredi, knowing that if Fredi is caught, I will die too.

Late in the evening I hear his light steps. The rabbit house door opens. I lift up the ceiling cover and Fredi comes up. He reports that the Professor doesn't want more violins. He has enough of them. After much talk he paid 3,000 zlotys. That will pay our expenses for one month at the Lorenc establishment. I know the bow and alligator case and violin are worth at least 6,000 zlotys. But what can we do? HE CERTAINLY THOUGHT THAT HE DID ME A BIG FAVOR, OR PERHAPS CHARITY.

It is getting colder. All day Fredi and I lie close to one another, trying to keep warm. From time to time, Fredi does algebraic and geometric exercises. I begin to read Molière. Now I am able to read. I feel that my brother is near me and that we are safe. I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HIM. I DIDN'T REALIZE IN THE PAST HOW MUCH I LOVE HIM & WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Some weeks later, early in the morning a big wagon drawn by two horses and loaded with sand passes the open side of the courtyard in the garden and stops directly above the place where the four people live in their underground bunker. Tosia Lorenc rushes to us in the rabbit house to tell us the news. What can we do? She dare not order the driver to move away; that would make him suspicious. We can do nothing, except wait.

We wait, and hope that the wagon will move on, and the people in the bunker will not be discovered. Otherwise, we are all lost, and the Lorenc family too.

In the afternoon, Mr. Adam Lorenc comes home. As soon as he hears of it, he says: "I was too good. Now we are lost." He leaves without another word - to the bar - "to kill the insect" (BUG) as he used to say.

Late that afternoon the sand is unloaded and the wagon and the workers leave the garden yard. In a hurry, Tosia Lorenc and her sons followed by the dog, open the cellar. It is almost full of earth, caving in on all sides for hours. The three women are naked and sweating from the heat of their own bodies and almost unconscious from lack of air. The little child cries silently on her mother's breast. Ghetto children learn to cry silently. The child's father was handed to the Nazis by the Ukranian Pitela. Mother and child escaped.

A doctor cannot be called. Coffee and bread bring these half-dead people back to life. Then they begin to cry. They were almost buried alive; the tears are of happiness to be in this world again.

The next night Fredi and the Lorenc boys and Mr. Adam Lorenc work until daylight with the dog watching until they repair the bunker so the girls can move back. But they refuse - after it is all rebuilt. They do not want to be trapped by falling earth and perhaps be buried alive. Even the rabbit house is better. They decide to move into the bottom of the rabbit house, FILLED WITH COLE AND WOOD.

The next day is Sunday. In the evening we have an invitation for dinner at the home of the Lorenc family - a regular dinner. We shave somehow. Fredi gives me a haircut with a manicure scissors. I cut his hair too. We dress for the dinner. Late at night we go to the house for our first regular dinner at that house. The table is loaded with food; soup, cake, hardboiled eggs, tomatoes. We are to stay in the house after we eat; it is perfect.

Mr. Adam Lorenc has just come home. We do not realize it, but he is already drunk. The girls go into the kitchen after dinner is finished to make the "beds". Fredi and I sit at the table playing cards. Adam Lorenc is fooling around with his youngest son.

"Will you make an armistice - or not? he shouts.

The boy answers, "No".

"Will you or not?" repeats Lorenc. At this point we realize that he is drunk.

The boy begins to cry, "No..No."

Lorenc covers the boy's head with a big pillow, pushes it down, trying to suffocate him and force him to declare an "armistice". I see the boy's body stops moving. The pillow is steadily moving down on his head.

I can't wait. I am trembling with excitement from the moment Adam Lorenc started to push the pillow on the boy's head. I get up, catch him by the shoulder, and fling him away from the boy. I do not have such strength in my arms; Adam must have been off balance. He falls against the wall to the right, looks at me with red pig-like eyes.

"You animal, you pig," he starts to shout, then whispers. "You try to spoil my son. I am his father, and he has to accept an armistice. You understand?" !

I am sick at heart. I go out into the courtyard, ignoring danger. I remain in the shadow of an old gnarled tree in the garden. From there I ~~hear~~ OVERHEARD Fredi say, "You shouldn't insult my brother. He meant no harm."

I return to the room a little calmer, but I feel that this is the final insult. That I should save the life of his son and be insulted for my pains. MRS LORENC HAD TO LIVE WITH A DRUNKARD. TO MAINTAIN A FAMILY TOGETHER.

At four in the morning we go back to the rabbit house, one at a time. It is unbearably cold. The odor hangs heavy over the rabbit house. During the past hours we have forgotten the smell and lost our immunity to it. Again we must live in this stench and keep hoping.

IT REMINDS ME THE ARTHER-ANCESTRIAL WAS GIVEN FOR THE FIRST TIME BY ALWAS IN -- I WAS FORCED! AND I CAN'T FORGET THAT SMELL!

Two months pass; they are full of cold, hunger, misery. We have less and less money. Fredi goes to Janda to sell him my last suit, a dark blue suit that is stored in Janda's home together with other things we own. Fredi is trying to collect money for old gold left from our jewelry. Although Janda knows that every bit of money we get is used to pay for our lives, day by day, he keeps haggling. He can't figure how much he got on the black market for the jewelry. At that moment, Fredi notices that Janda is wearing ~~the~~ MY blue suit. Janda had altered it to fit, and was using it as his own. Fredi asks about payment.

Janda falls into a crazy fury, pulls a knife out of his pocket, and showing his teeth like a mad dog, moves threateningly toward Fredi. From the corner of the room, Rose, Janda's Jewish wife, sees this, bites on her finger tips, her eyes wet with tears.

Janda is ready to kill my brother for confronting him with two swindles at the same time; the gold and jewelry sold, and the suit, altered, worn and not paid for. Janda is even angrier because his adored wife is watching and listening.

Fredi takes in the situation instantly. In one jump he catches Janda's hand, squeezes it like a sponge until the knife falls out of his tense fingers. Fredi kicks the knife into the far end of the room. He does not touch Janda.

Through his teeth Janda shouts, "You dirty Jew." The corners of his mouth pull down in a ferocious grimace. THE UGLY TRUTH CAME OUT FROM HIS MOUTH EVEN THOUGH HIS WIFE IS JEWISH. I MADE MY CONCLUSION! EVERY ANTISEMITE HAS ONE JEW IN STOCK!

His wife, Rose, sits sobbing in the corner, her little boy hidden in the folds of her dress. Janda storms out of the house, banging the door with all his strength. Rose says to Fredi sadly, "A Jewish girl should never marry a goy - a Christian."

When Fredi tells me about Janda I am sick with shame and anger. Janda, my barber for many years, who received our family's furniture and stored our valuable things, who made a great deal of money on our family. I am very much grieved, I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT

That night I cannot sleep. I fall into sleep late in the morning. I am awakened by knocking on the floor below. "Lunch" is served, together with green stuff for the rabbits. From the soup bowl, each of us gets twelve spoonsful of soup. We each get seven tiny potatoes and one-half inch of pork fat. After this meal, I try to sleep again.

From that time on, I cannot sleep at night. I get feverishly hungry at 2 or 3 in the morning. With eager voluptuousness I take a big piece of bread from my hiding place, dip it in watery jam, and lying on my back, I chew piece after piece, finding indescribable pleasure in feeling it move down into my stomach. Fredi is asleep on his back, snoring lightly. It is pitch dark.

Under us, on the ground floor of the rabbit house are the four women, pressed tightly together, in deep sleep in the bitter cold. From time to time, I hear a cough. That means danger - to all of us.

In the silence it seems to me that I hear footsteps on the staircase, almost touching the door of our rabbit house. Someone goes very carefully down the stairs, very lightly, but the old wooden stairs creak. I do not move. The sound moves down the stairs; it is inside the bottom of the rabbit house. Someone is trying to open the door of the bottom of the rabbit house, I HEAR THE DOORHANDLE TURNING BUT THE DOOR DOESN'T OPEN...

My excitement mounts. We are lost; the end is coming. The door handle turns again and again. There is a gentle knock. After a pause, there is the sound of someone going upstairs again, and the stairs creak and complain again.

I wake Fredi from his best sleep, and open the ceiling hole to talk to the girls. They heard everything. "What can we do?" says pretty blonde little Anna in simple resignation.

We are discovered, without doubt. But we dare not tell Lorenc. He would throw us out immediately.

A few days pass. At two O'clock one morning, while I am eating my past-midnight snack in a new wave of wild hunger, I hear steps on the wooden courtyard balcony. The steps pass right above us, very stealthily. I wake Fredi, putting my hand over his mouth in the darkness. The steps pass. Whoever it is, is now standing directly over our heads. We stop breathing. I hear someone bend down toward his floor and our ceiling to listen to us, to make sure that there are really people in the rabbit house. The tension is insupportable.

I am sure he can hear my heart beat. I am absolutely sure. I lie on my chest, trying to mute the sound of my heart. The visitor listens for a moment. Then slow, stealthy steps move away, and we are left in the darkness, frightened and breathless.

It is now weeks since the first turning of the door handle at night frightened us. Nothing more has happened. Nothing except this furtive, night-walking almost every night.

I think of Pitela, the Ukranian Nazi whose rabbit house is next to ours. I think of death, of seizure, of Gestapo agents. I am afraid,

The cold grows more bitter. It snows without end. Genia is coughing, much too often for my peace of mind. We are very unhappy about her illness: this is no place for sickness.

Our life here is difficult. I envy the life of the partisans in the forest. They move around, seize food, arms, take prisoners, disarm guards, fight for arms and food, live in caverns and caves. They have a chance to escape - if they fight. We cannot fight. We are trapped. WE CANNOT SHOW OUR FACES TO THE WORLD WHAT A TRAGEDY. I THINK AGAIN AND AGAIN.

Here in the rabbit house we take turns watching. One night the cat-like footsteps come again. Perhaps the rabbits have escaped from their cages below - but it is not the noise of rabbits. Someone is climbing carefully to the entrance of our top-floor apartment, and is pushing violently at the cover we made on the ceiling of the apartment below us. I sit silent, trembling, waiting. The cover is being pushed up. I break in on Fredi's calm sleep to ask if we should let the person in. We talk a moment, then swing the entrance wide.

It is Genia, with her bad cough. She begs us to take her in only for that night because on the ground where they are all four squeezed together it is deathly cold.

How can two young men under such conditions take a young girl in to sleep in their five foot square cage? No. Absolutely No. It is not possible. We are deeply sorry, but life is difficult enough as it is. Genia insists. No, we repeat. We cannot take her. Tomorrow, perhaps all four of them will want to join us. The answer is: No.

I close the entrance cover and Genia goes down in the dark. My heart is sick with hate for myself, but what can be done? It is impossible, I keep repeating to myself. Her coughing, her being so close. The answer must be: No. IT'S THE CRUEL, COLDBLOODED ANSWER THAT I WOULD NEVER GIVE TO HER IN [illegible]

The next day Tosia Lorenc invites Genia back to her apartment. Again Genia sits on a suitcase back of the door. For a time all seems in order.

One day the doorbell rings. The dog jumps at the door with a tremendous outburst of barking. Genia is so frightened that she completely loses her self-control and rushes to the window. On the way she knocks over a beautiful vase standing on the table near the window. She plunges out of the window into the courtyard. Genia thinks it is the Gestapo, tries to save herself. But it is only a soldier, a German soldier, looking for some information. He is so frightened by the big dog that he runs away.

But Genia is now outside in the courtyard and people have seen her jump out of the window. Tosia Lorenc rushes to the rabbit house to tell us to leave immediately. The Gestapo will surely come now.

In a wild hurry, we dress, arrange our faces and hair. The girls, together with bitterly sobbing Genia, cause of all the misfortune, try to get out as quickly as possible. Fredi and I make a fast plan. He takes a street car. I go on foot because I am not shaved. We expected nothing like this; I am not shaved. I cannot go in a cab. To go unshaved in a cab would be to invite attention. In an old cap and workman's suit I can perhaps walk four miles to the home of a friend, Komada, in the western part of the city. I CARRY A BIG BUCKET IN GERMANY. THAT GIRLS ARE MORE CONFIDENCE ...LOOK LIKE A WORKMAN

I can hardly walk. It is many months since I walked. Climbing through the opening to the community feeding pot on the ground floor of the rabbit house and climbing upstairs to my top-floor apartment did not give my legs practice in walking. I struggle, toil. My legs seem to belong to someone else. After a great effort, I force my legs to walk.

LAST QUARTET

By the time I walk half a mile, I am out of breath. I sweat; I am exhausted. I am almost resigned to be caught, and to die on the gallows. Shall I be another nameless, faceless sacrifice? No. I do not want to die. I do not want to die. I IMAGINE A SMILING SKELTON WALKING AT MY SIDE, LIKE AN INVITATION TO „HIS WORLD". HE IS SMILING, BUT HIS TEETH ARE RATTLING SOME STRANGE MELODY.. OFCOURSE, IT'S ME WHO INVENTED THAT „COMPANION" JUST LIKE I INVENTED THE „LUCKY NUMBER" HAT" THAT SUPPOSED TO „SAVE ME" FROM ALL TROUBLE. AND IT MADE ME MORE „AT EASE" AND MORE „IMMUNE" EVERY DAY I BECAME TOUGER & TOUGHER -- „AM I LOSING MY MIND?" I ASK MYSELF OFTEN. " OF COURSE I NEVER DREAM TO REVEAL THOSE THINGS TO ANYBODY..

C H A P T E R XII

I walk past the neat, well-kept gardens, the streets crowded with playing children, Grzegorzecka Street viaduct, the market, the Medical School where I used to attend free classes in Anatomy. I have perhaps 400 yards to go. These streets are swept clean of all Jews. And Fredi's friend does not know I am coming and does not know me.

There are only two young children and a boy of sixteen at home. They look at me and whisper to one another. I try to smile, but it must be horrible, because they mimic my smile and make faces at me. I don't wait for an invitation; I slump into a chair to rest. "I have to see your parents," I say with more confidence than I feel.

I sit there for two long hours until Mr. Komada comes home. When he sees me at the table, trying to read a newspaper, he merely says, "Hello."

He never saw me. He is a friend of Fredi's delivery man. But he shakes hands and offers me tobacco and paper so I can roll a cigarette. By this time factory made cigarettes cannot be obtained. Mr. Komada is unusually friendly and alert; he works as foreman in the Sanitation Department.

We have a pleasant chat about the war situation. If only the Allies would open a second front, if only Russia would move..... Mr. Komada asks if I play chess, and brings out a game. I have not played in a long time, but he is no expert. We play chess, smoke and talk, while the children begin to ask about supper. We put the chess game away when his wife comes home with two big milk cans.

As he explains to me later, the milk cans are used for black-market operations with alcohol. There is a false bottom in each, into which they pour "bimber" - home made drinking alcohol. She goes by train to the country where thirsty farmers give her pork-fat, flour, beans and butter for the "bimber". But she must be careful. She is the mother of three children and an excellent wife. Her face is serious as Mr. Komada explains who I am. I feel that I cannot stay here for any length of time. THE ATMOSPHERE IS RATHER TENSE. PROBABLY MORE FOR ME AS USUALLY IS THE CASE.

A few days later, Fredi joins me here. He stopped at his friend's attic for five days. Then he had to leave. We sit down at the table and spend the time from morning to evening playing chess. We play slowly, taking a long time with each move, as if we were famous chess experts. It helps pass the time.

Fredi attempts to make Komada forget the danger we bring with us to their basement home. He offers to paint portraits. He has some skill in this. From his studies in architecture he knows how to use sketching and drawing instruments. He sends them out to buy paper, pencils, paints, brushes. Fredi begins his project of painting everyone in the household. It is a deliberate plan to keep them occupied.

I am driven to work when I see Fredi making progress on the improvised stand. I try to compose some music. We keep so busy at these things that all their concern is about the unusual work we are doing in their apartment.

But one Sunday afternoon, Komada offers us tobacco and sits down for a serious talk. We have to leave. The black-market business is bad enough, but our being in the house... The police merely confiscate black-market merchandise. But if they find Jews - it means death to the entire family. It has happened before. We understand, only too well.

The Marquis de S——— received the French title when he served in the first World War as a major of Polish troops fighting in France for freedom. His wife was always interested in our progress; mine in music, Fredi's in architecture. They are excellent people, democratic, not rich. She worked as a teacher of French. In our family store, they asked for easy terms to buy or remodel furs. She always had trouble paying her bills. Perhaps they can help us now.

On a Saturday afternoon Fredi goes to the home of the Marquis. The Marquis de S——— opens the door himself. "It is not comfortable," he says, "not comfortable in such hellish times to keep a maid." When Fredi mentions the family name, the Marquis becomes very friendly, just as he had always been with our parents and his wife's friends. Fredi offers to sell him the gold watch. "I have two watches like this," says the Marquis. He is now a representative, a sales agent, making a living, but not too much money. Fredi asks him about crossing the frontier to another country, where Jews may live in camps, but still live in some kind of freedom.

The Marquis advises Fredi to take good shoes, no whiskey, no guns, just a compass and a map, and go by train to the frontier. Then at night, to cross the mountains, forests, snow, whatever is in the way.

Fredi thinks it is a fantastic plan. "Only such fantastic plans," says the Marquis, "Only such plans lead to libe rty. You will die or you will be free." As he shakes hands cordially at the door he adds, "Have courage. Believe in yourself."

A few days later, Adam Lorenc comes to us with an ultimatum. He says plainly, "If you don't pay, you have to leave. I will not risk my life for nothing."A COLD CHILL RUNS DOWN MY SPINE I KNEW ALL ALONG THAT SUCH A MOMENT WILL COME, I ALWAYS SHIVERED AT THE EVENTUALITY...

We have not even one zloty. We have nothing to sell, no clothing, nothing. Only the watch that no one wants to buy. We are discouraged, beaten down, defeated. Something must happen soon. I pray to God that something should happen.

When Fredi goes to town to sell the watch, prices are down again. They tell him to wait until the next "hausee" - the next purchase market for jewelry. We are at a blank wall.

When Fredi returns he brings me a fine red apple and regards from Rena, a neighbor in the ghetto. He met her on the way home. The last time we met, I proposed to her. She said simply that she likes me very much, but that she does not know if her husband is dead. He was captured in Siberia. She is delighted to see Fredi and hear that I am alive too. Fredi tells her about our money troubles and his half-formed plan of crossing the frontier. Rena suddenly has an idea. A friend of hers, Mrs. S.——— has been in this business a long time; she organized groups of Jews, and she has a band of smugglers who know the secret passes in the mountains. They lead the groups of Jews to the nearest country of refuge, Slovakia. In Slovakia, some Jews are still free, but many are taken to "transports" and gas chambers. Do we want to go to Slovakia? We can talk to Mrs. S———.

I eat Rena's apple, after I break it in half to give some to Fredi. Mrs. S———, smugglers. Perhaps there is something to it.

That evening, Adam Lorenc invites us to a late dinner with the family. After fifteen months living as strangers in the rabbit house, we are suddenly invited to dinner. I become very uncomfortable when I notice a strange face at the table.

I do not like surprises like this. But the man seems friendly.

MRS SHYMANOWSKA

He is a Polish Christian, bright, alert, a strong man with a democratic point of view. He is in contact with the partisans. In fact, his job is to travel for the partisans from forests to cities to buy sweaters for the partisans: LIVING AT THE FOREST ONE NEEDS TO BE LIKE OTHER FOREST DWELLERS - THE ANIMALS...

I become quite friendly when I learn that he is the man who brings to the girls in the rabbit house food, pork-fat, butter and beans in exchange for woolen sweaters and gloves that they knit for him from re-worked wool. The girls keep busy at this work, sometimes tearing apart an old sweater to salvage the wool, sometimes knitting new sweaters from the wool. THEY WORK LIKE BEES. NOT A WORD, ONLY THEIR FINGERS RUN THE WOOL UP AND DOWN...

I realize that this man is important. I give him the proposition: the gold watch if the partisans will pick us up here. We prefer to fight in the forest - rather than to die slowly in the horrible stench of the rabbit house. He promises to ask his commanding officer and let us know within a week.

The next evening Fredi goes to Mrs. S———. She is an unusual woman. In the two years since she began her "business" perhaps 3,000 Jews have passed the mountain frontier. But now, there are no more Jews - and the business is discontinued. The price, in any event, is 30,000 zlotys for each person. Fredi explains to her that we have only the gold watch, that even by begging from our old bosses we cannot raise more than 20,000 zlotys. She says she will look into the matter, talk to the people involved.

Fredi comes home late that evening, worn out. He is becoming weary of these endless expeditions through "clean" streets and the constant danger. He has no weapons; he goes into certain death, but God willing, comes back. Fredi is a real hero. He is afraid, and yet he does what has to be done, NO MATTER THE PRICE HE MIGHT PAY. EXTREME

We must do something. In our minds we make preparations for the "trip". We have nothing but vague ideas, but Fredi is beginning to believe what the ~~Marquis~~ COUNT told him. It begins to look as if we must cross the frontier, somehow, to somewhere.

Fredi continues his efforts. The very next evening he goes to his last boss, in the engineering office. He knows that one window has a broken lock. It opens wide the moment Fredi pushes it. In all the time since Fredi left, no one has seen fit to repair it. In an instant, Fredi is inside the office. It is on the main floor; the window faces the courtyard near the garages where the cars are hidden. The Nazis have requisitioned all private cars for a long time, but this boss is half-Nazi. He has connections; he cares nothing about rules. Fredi, inside the office, sits down in a club chair. He falls asleep.

Fredi laughs when he tells me about it. But it is not funny at all.

In the morning, Engineer F[GILLIS]———, the boss of the office, pulls Fredi by the arm and rouses him from sleep. "This is more than anyone can imagine," he says. "Who opened the door for you? How can you do something like this? You know what danger it is to all of us?

Fredi combs his hair, explains our situation briefly, and asks for money to save our lives. The engineer thinks a moment. Then he thrusts 3,000 zlotys into Fredi's hands and says, "Please never come again. It is too dangerous."

With the 3,000 zlotys Fredi goes to Mrs. S———. She introduces him to two lanky characters. They have "worked" with her for a long time. Fredi keeps talking, trying to persuade them to make the deal. Finally, they agree to lead us through the mountains, but we must go by by train, at our own risk, to the frontier town. They will ride with us on the train. A REGULAR TRAIN WITH ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE... BUT NOT JEWS -- JEWS BELONG TO THE HISTORY

There is no other way. There is no choice. We must try. Fredi approves the deal.

Fredi comes back to the rabbit house in the afternoon. He whispers, "Come on. They are waiting."

I get so excited my body trembles in shock. I am not able to talk.

For fifteen months I have walked only three times, only three times on the streets to change my hiding place. Now I have to climb mountains.

Fredi explains in whispers. "They will pick us up not far from the train in a horse-drawn sled, and we will only have a short distance of no-man's land to walk on foot." He continues, "leave everything. Hurry. Take your old coat, put on your shoes, and let's go."

For fifteen months we have whispered. Even now in our last moments of planning, we must whisper. We prepare in complete secrecy for "luck". We drop through the opening, start out the door. The girls ask where we are going together. "To the bath," I answer in an ordinary, slow whisper. "We are coming back soon."

As we leave, I say, "Goodbye, little rabbits."

WITH „BUTTERFLIES" IN MY STOMACH I START WALKING MY STEPS FEEL AS IF I WAS TIGHTROPE DANCING AT THE SIDE OF MY EYES ALL SEEMS TO JUGGLE UP & DOWN... WHAT A MACABRE SENSATION WALKING! PEOPLE ON THE STREET DON'T EVEN REALIZE HOW LUCKY THEY ARE! TO WALK, AND TO WALK FREE, WE PASS NEWSSTANDS, LIGHTED STORE-WINDOWS, MOVIE-THE ATRES HOW BEAUTIFUL IS THE WORLD. BUT NOT FOR US...

 NOT FOR US.

C H A P T E R XIII

My legs are much worse since that last trip to Mr. Komoda and back. I can hardly walk; I breathe with difficulty.

I think bitterly, here I can hardly walk. And once I was an athlete, a fine tennis player, horse-back rider, skier, swimmer, skater. I walk with strange legs; huge black circles form in front of my eyes. I feel it is my last moment. Fredi tries to help me, but I feel I shall die on the way. FROM EXHAUSTION OR COLD.

One of the men Mrs. S——— sent, takes me by the arm. The other goes with Fredi about 25 yards behind. We have to go to the railroad station.

My man feels the overwhelming weakness in me and talks to me, "You are free. Courage. Tomorrow you will both be in a new country. Courage."

I struggle onward. Somehow I get to the station. The men buy our tickets. We wait for the train. People turn to stare at me. I have not shaved in four days. Our two men watch us; we watch them. It is, I think, absolute suicide to go on a train, out in the public view.

It is late in the evening; the cold is worse now. It has been snowing for several days. Noise: the train is coming - completely dark. Because of air-raid alerts, the trains run without lights.

It is crowded, smoky, dirty. We climb the high steps in a hurry and get in. One of the men will stand at the left door; one at the right door. I will cover one window; Fredi the other. We arrange a signal in case there is trouble.

The train pulls out, and my native town is behind me. In the dark, I stare out of the window. My hat is jammed low over my eyes. "Don't let anyone see your eyes," the men have warned me. "You have Jewish,

persecuted eyes."

"Is this the Jewish cemetery?" asks someone at my left near the window. I feel that I have a companion. The train is indeed passing the old Jewish cemetery. "I don't know," I answer pleasantly.

After a while I hear a bit of gay conversation: "Ordinary soap they make of regular Jews, but the fine-smelling soap they make of the rich, distinguished Jewish girls.", HA, HA, HA, "RESPONDS A BRAT

A group of Polish students, probably college students, boys and girls are making jokes, and we two Jews, Fredi and I, are on this train listening to such inhuman jests. What is the world coming to? I am hurt, discouraged. I lose something of my will to live. "WHERE IS GOD?" I ASK MYSELF FOR THE THOUSANDTH TIME...

Fredi tells me that he has the watch safe; it is hanging in a bag inside his shirt. We have to give it to the two men on the way to the frontier. I am uneasy. I have lost hope since I heard that fragment of conversation; I WAS GLAD NOT HAVING A GUN IN MY POCKET; THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE END OF THEM AND MINE...

Suddenly our man on the right door pulls my arm violently. He orders me to open the door of the train and sit on the steps, together with Fredi. There is an inspection on the train; THEY'RE LOOKING FOR SMUGGLERS, BLACKMARKETEERS, CONTRABAND.

We sit on the steps as the express train rolls along. For seven or eight minutes of absolute horror we are lashed by ice-cold wind. I use every ounce of strength to hold on to the handle of the passageway. The wind is furiously buffeting my tired body. "DON'T LET GO!" I HEAR MY "FRIEND" THE SKELETON, LAUGHING IN MY EARS...

The ice-cold freezes every nerve within me; the wind tears into our lungs; we are desperate, hanging to the icy handle of the passageway, trying to keep from falling off the slippery, icy steps.

Fortunately, the inspection team moves on to the next coach. Our two men pull us up into the train. We are unable to speak. OUR FACES HAVE AN ICE MASK...

We arrive at the frontier without incident. At midnight, our guides order us to jump from the rear of the train, dash over the rails and climb the snow-covered hill standing high above, FOLLOWING THEM.

"To climb the hill?" asks Fredi after we follow their instructions.

"Where is the sled?" I ask my brother in a whisper.

He doesn't answer, but begins to climb quickly. I try to follow. It is about 8 degrees below zero. The cold air is bitter; I am shaking. Then I vomit. They have to stop for a time until I recover.

The sled does not come. Our two men do not know why. We are to walk. Another guide and his son appear to help us. It is only seven miles through the "little" hills, they tell us. Now we are six people.

We spread out about 100 yards apart and begin our march. The snow is about twelve inches deep, in some places more than fifteen. Our feet sink in with each step. After an hour of struggle I am finished. I lie down in the snow.

"Leave me here," I say. "I will die. I cannot go one more step."

"Are you crazy?" demands Fredi. "Now that we are almost free, you want to stay in the snow. Pick up your last bit of energy. Come on. We go to liberty."

The two tall men take my arms and "walk" me. I am ashamed, half-dead, resigned to perish in the beautiful shining snow, the crystal clear mountain air. The moon is bright above us: a horrible, beautiful night.

I want to take off my overcoat: I am sweating, but the cold is growing more bitter. My knees feel as if a thousand pins were sticking inside them. The men give me a stick to help me walk, but I can hardly lift the stick. I cannot walk. As I hesitate, we notice ski tracks in the snow. A mountain control guard with police dogs has passed here. THE NAZIS GUARD THAT MOUNTAIN TRAIL; THEY KNOW THAT SOMETHING IS GOING ON...

A thin whistle comes from our first guide. Perhaps he sighted the ski patrol.

We rush to him and find that he has fallen into a deep snow hole. (DITCH) Two of our men try to pull him out. In the process, they fall into the hole themselves. We do not know what to do.

I have an idea. "Who has a sharp knife?" I ask. One of the men brings me his knife. I begin to cut down a small pine tree. We throw the tree to the struggling people in the snow hole. Slowly, with superhuman effort, they climb out of the snow hole. We continue our march." EVERY STEP WAS A ENORMOUS EFFORT.

The same thing happens twice again. Fredi falls into a snow hole. We get him out without too much trouble. But for the second time three of the leaders fall into a snow hole; they were trying to help one another. Again we cut a small tree, and work to the limit of our strength to help them out.

We splash our way across a shallow mountain stream, perhaps twenty inches deep. After we cross, our guides demand the gold watch.

"Are we in Slovakia?" Fred and I ask.

"Almost." The outstretched hands reach for the watch.

I am filled with foreboding. But these are four strong country fellows; we two, Fredi and I, are dead tired; IT WOULD BE USELESS TO DO ANY BARGAINING RESISTANCE." Fredi opens his shirt, pulls out the watch and hands it over. They forget everything at that moment. They walk a few steps away, open the watch, light a candle and look inside it, counting the jewels, or inspecting its interior. Then they come to me and demand the rest of the money I had sewed into my pants cuffs.

I hand over all the money.

The two guides who picked us up at the Lorenc place leave us, saying, "You are in good hands. They lead you to liberty."

We still have two farmers for guides, father and son. They help us drag ourselves to a hayloft just before sunrise. We are told to hide in the hay among the cows, AND GOATS; SOMEHOW THE ANIMALS GAVE ME A WARM FEELING; I WISHED I COULD STAY HERE... My knees are painful; our legs hurt. We cannot travel. All we can do now is wait, and hope.

Late in the afternoon, the old farmer comes to talk. "How much did you give those two guys in the forest?" he asks.

"Didn't you see?" answers my brother.

"Yes, I did," he says. "But what do I get out of it?"

I lose patience. "Cut our hearts out, rip off every stitch of clothing. We have nothing."

"I don't look in your pockets," he says. "But we were told you give me 10,000 zlotys."

It is Fredi's turn to explode. "We gave the gold watch, the cash. That's all we have. We've lost everything. Mrs. S———promised..."

I hide my head in the hay.

These people are masters of our life. After a time, the farmer leaves.

In the evening they come to tell us to prepare for the road. At dawn we move.

Again we climb hills, push through forests in the deep snow, and fall into snow holes. We freeze, crossing small rivulets and icy streams. At sunset, we notice a shack, a chalet where the farmers stay during the summer when the sheep graze on the hills. We are told to climb up to the shack and wait there until dark. They will come for us...

We force ourselves to the top of the hill and enter the shack. We close the door quickly, but the wildly howling wind blows a steady stream of snow through big openings in the wooden (LOG - walls. Our feet are wet through. We are shaking from head to foot; our teeth chatter as if we are in high fever. We take off our socks, squeeze them dry, then put them on again! We sit back to back, trying to get some warmth from one another, like the rabbits used to do during cold weather.

We have no money at all; not a zloty. We are famished, frozen, feverish - at the same time. We are dead tired, sleepy; our legs ache in misery. THE WORST THOUGHTS TURN IN MY MIND.

Late that evening, the farmer's son skis up to bring us milk and country bread. "You see," he says, "We will not let you die from hunger. Eat and be ready in an hour."

It is several hours later before they pick us up. We begin our third night of climbing. At daybreak, the father shows us a tree a long distance away. "That tree is a frontier tree," he says. "You will see an 'S' carved on it. That means Slovakia." SCRATCH OFF THE SNOW."

Another hour of painful marching brings us under the tall pine tree. We look at the 'S'. The farmers go down to the cottage to tell their friend in the frontier village that we have arrived. They promise to arrange for a day of rest for us in the cottage.

We wait, freezing in the snow and wind. It is more than an hour - LONG AS A YEAR - before we see one climbing to us. Everything is arranged. We go down to the cottage. The two who took us here talk a while, then leave.

Our new host is a Slovak farmer. He speaks good Polish. During the first World War he was in the Polish Army. For a few moments he seems very friendly. Then he demands money.

Thirty dollars, in American money, if we want to join the other Jewish free people. He will take no other money. That is his price; for three years now he has been paid in dollars only. Jews always pay.

"We have not one zloty; we have nothing; we have no dollars," I say. "Take our hats, shirts, razors, cigarettes, lighters, socks...but give us something to eat."

The Slovak farmer says he will take nothing, but he takes everything, and leaves. In the afternoon, he says something about the frontier guard. "Maybe they come to inspect the house," he says. "Someone must have informed them of your coming...But don't be alarmed," he adds.

At midnight, just as we are ready to sleep, we hear dogs and voices. He MUST HAVE CALLED THEM HIMSELF. IT LOOKS LIKE

The door swings open. Two gigantic police dogs jump in, announcing the arrival of two armed guards on skis. "Don't move," shouts the older of them. "The dogs will tear you to pieces. They are trained."

One dog sits down at my side, the other at Fredi's side, while the guards question the farmer. "It's strange that all the time refugees come to your house."

He replies, "What can I do if my house is right opposite the frontier forest?"

They order us to dress and go with them. We are under arrest.

They are completing a night meeting as we enter the frontier guard station house. We are questioned, inspected, ordered to take off all our clothes. We understand only a few words. The language is difficult, but a few words resemble words we know in Polish.

They look in our pockets, check our photographs, ask about Fredi's algebraic exercises stuffed in his pockets and music paper in mine.

"You sleep here on the floor," they say. "Tomorrow we take you to a city where other Jews live. Maybe they help you."

One of the men, an obvious moron, says, "We deliver you to the Gestapo." But the other men do not like this, and the commandant tells him something quickly in their own language, TO MITIGATE HIM. HE REMAINED SILENT PERHAPS ASHAMED...

A young guard moves us into another room. He gives us blankets, on the floor, and sits down, putting his rifle to his right side. "Don't try to escape," he says. "I catch you.". Like some of the other guards he speaks Polish, A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT POLISH.

In great fear, I try to talk to the guard. I cannot sleep because of excitement boiling in me. The guard goes to the door, looks out, closes it very carefully. He comes to me quickly. "You know, we here, we are all allied partisans, all of us," he says. "We wait only for orders on the secret radio to begin resistance." (SABOTAGE ETC,EET.C.

I am astounded, happy. I look at Fredi, sleeping peacefully. My heart is warm and young again. I do not want to wake Fredi. I go to sleep smiling, FIRST TIME SINCE YEARS I FEEL HOPEFUL ---

In the morning I ask an officer for bread, VERY SHYLY I ALMOST WISPER.

"I order the cook to make breakfast for you," he replies.

I whisper the news to Fredi, who does not believe it, as we walk into the canteen. They serve us scrambled eggs, white bread, pork fat, coffee, sugar. Fredi, astounded with the food, begins to believe my report. We are suddenly gay and laughing. The cook smiles as he pokes his head through an opening in the wall leading to the kitchen.

Next morning an armed frontier guard comes to pick us up, brings us military railway tickets, and takes us to Mikulás. On the train, he introduces himself to us, sits directly opposite. During the trip, people stare at our faces and our clothing. Some of them understand...

They bring us bread, cigarettes, butter, fruits. We share the cigarettes with the guard.

In Mikulas, he takes us to the "Beth ~~Hamidresh~~ HAMIDRASH" - synagogue, where we meet 32 Jewish refugees from many different countries, living in a hall, camping like gypsies. They are surprised to see us. No one has come from outside for many months; THEY SAY IT OVER & OVER AGAIN...

The guard has orders to deliver us to prison for passing the frontier illegally. The synagogue president talks with us. He promises to help us on our way.

We can hardly walk. Our legs are one mass of pain. Our faces frighten us; they are full of nasty pimples from fever. Somehow we are not sick. Only our legs bother us terribly.

We are led into a cell. Among our companions, a murderer, a sixteen year old boy who poisoned his farmer boss for maltreating him. There is also a partisan, denounced by his angry girl friend.

Life in jail is not all bad. The other prisoners share bread, butter, and even cake with us. I try to figure how to get out of jail, but the problem is too difficult for my mind. I tell Fredi about a Slovak furrier who two and a half years ago came to our factory in Krakow. He said he would help me, if I could get out of Poland, into Slovakia. "Come to me," he said. "Iwill take care." He lives with his family in Slovakia, but travels to Poland on business. From jail, however, I cannot even write him a letter.

Our first night in jail does not seem bad. In fact, by comparison with some of the places we lived in, the jail is very comfortable." ALL I WANT IS TO SURVIVE THE FIRST NIGHT. I DON'T TRUST THESE INMATES; WHO KNOWS WHAT THEY CAN DO TO US WHILE WE SLEEP... AND AS IT TURNED OUT I WAS WASN'T WRONG...

Next morning the guard throws open the heavy doors of our half-dark cell. "everyone out," he orders. "You have to work at the wood sawing."

Our legs are sore and painful; our knees feel as if someone were sticking them with knives. We have to stand all day, eight hours a day, at work.

Several times I beg the guard to give us a little consideration, but he does not answer. He is an old drunkard: by afternoon he is usually completely soused.

From time to time as we work in the enclosure, people pass money to us through the bars. Always the guard is there, stretching out his hand "gently"... He takes all the money for himself.

Since that night in the forest we have thought of nothing but how to get money. Fredi sets to work on a portrait of an old swindler in our cell. The old man is rich, even in jail. Fredi earns 25 crowns for the portrait. It is our first money earned in the new country.

While Fredi earns money, I lose my best pair of wool socks, my last remembrance from my mother. I have kept them carefully all this time. In jail, they stay under my pillow. But one night they disappear.

Our cell mates are evidently working at the usual trade, even in prison.

Not long after the guard shoots his fine dog, saying "He eats too much." We have to dig a grave for the dog in the enclosure. But the guard is a "sentimental" man. He skins the dog. He will keep the skin as a souvenir.

I wonder if he would like to do the same with us.

I take our blankets outside to beat out the lice. I am very angry; I beat the blankets furiously. But it is the guard I am angry with. A fine man. A very fine man, HE IS IN MY MIND WORSE THAN THE LICE!

A few weeks pass. One day the partisan who was betrayed by his girl friend gets a message. Allied partisans came to her home, and said to the father, "your daughter denounced an allied soldier-partisan to the Nazis. She must die as an enemy. You may look, or you may get out." And they shot her down. Jahn, in prison, receives the message with no sight of emotion.

Some weeks later, we are set free - illegally, of course. With the prisoners we leave our last shirts; they insist. A young Jewish orphan girl calls for us and leads us to the bathhouse. After that she takes us to a small synagogue. At night, the rabbi brings pillows and blankets. We are to sleep in the back room where the women of the congregation pray during holidays. He warns us: "Do not go near the window."

We are free. Free in a large city and in a small synagogue.

Only some thirty Jews are alive in the city. They come in the morning and in the evening for prayers. They speak to us, cheer us up, bring money, food, things we need. But they are legal residents; we are illegally in the country.

Fredi begins to paint portraits. I start to compose music, a few pieces for violin and piano. I dedicate these to our neighbors, Tochten, kind-hearted people who often bring good hot dishes.

As soon as I can get paper, I send a letter to Mr. Marlak, the Slovak furrier. I tell him I am in Slovakia and that I want to work in his ~~factory~~. SHOP. THE MAN WHOM I MET IN POLAND LONGTIME AGO...

At the synagogue we hear a rumor that the long awaited second front has opened. It is hard to believe this news in the synagogue at Mikulas. But it is good news. We need good news, WE WAITED AND WAITED SO LONG... THESE NEWS ARE THE REAL „SYMPHONY" TO US; TO OUR TIRED MINDS...

Not long after, Mr. Marlak, the Slovak furrier comes to get me at the synagogue. I go with him to Smerdonka. Fredi remains at the synagogue with a new-found friend, Lacy. They will stay.

My job in Smerdonka is a cutter's job. It is hard work. I sleep in the factory, but I am illegally in the country - and I am a Jew. It is not safe.

Fredi writes to me that he and Lacy are going to a work-camp for Jewish refugees who volunteer to work on the tobacco plantations. He says the work is hard, but they are happy.

Fredi does not look Jewish. ~~By chance,~~ he was born during the last war in 1914 in this country, that is Czechoslovakia. He is therefore a native of this country. When we were released from prison, they told us we have to leave the country at once. Fredi is a native; he can stay. But I am in danger.

Slovakia, as a member of the Rome-Berlin Axis, is not occupied officially by the Nazis. Slovak soldiers fight in the Nazi armies. But among the ordinary people, there are rumors that partisans like those in Poland and the other occupied countries are in the mountains waiting for orders. There are rumors that they have captured a high officer in the German army. There will be armed conflict when the secret orders come. . .

That would be a calamity for me. Jews are always the first casualties. Armed conflict between partisans and Nazis would mean that the Nazis would inspect, check, investigate more thoroughly, ARREST AND EXECUTE.

I am very careful when I go out in the evening or on Sunday. I make my face freeze like that of the typical Nazi so that no one will denounce me. I take long walks through the forest or to a distant landscape. When I meet a Nazi, I practice painfully the salute, "Heil Hitler" - and pass

with a dying heart. No one notices me. So far I am lucky. I am rehearsing against the day when armed conflict does start, and a fast "Heil Hitler" may save my life.

One day, as I sit on the barber's chair, I hear whispers, "It is coming." That evening, as I am locked in the ~~factory,~~ SHOP, I hear a shot. Another shot replies. There is silence. My heart is almost breaking: I cannot see Fredi. Soon "liberation" - or sudden death.

Machine guns open up. Rifles respond. The gunfire builds into a mighty symphony. All night machine guns chatter in the forest. I cannot sleep. I am watchful, ready to join the partisans and go to find my brother so we can join in the fight. We will fight. We will revenge our murdered parents and the millions of nameless ones driven to the slaughter. My bag is packed; I can move at the first opportunity.

The shooting becomes very heavy. It would be suicide to show even a finger outside. I have to wait until the partisans control the town. At three in the morning, a cannon begins to thunder somewhere to the left of the ~~factory.~~ WORK-SHOP. Something hits the wall with a crash.

I feel I am soon to die. After a while I look at the wall; the mirror hangs at an angle. My face is still there; pale, frightened, but still my face. I am alive. "Quiet," I say to the mice who scratch endlessly here, looking for food. "Patience."

Late in the morning, my boss, Mr. Warlak, comes to the factory. He is very much disturbed. He tells me that the partisans have been driven back to the forest leaving seven dead on the streets. "Did you have breakfast?" he asks me. "MY GOD - I THINK - SEVEN HEROES - DEAD!"

I am starved. I have eaten nothing in 20 hours. But the terrible news that the partisans have been driven off, extinguishes all hunger and all hope. I am again invaded by gloomy thoughts.

There is the question: Will Mr. Marlak keep me hidden? I have no courage to ask him. I decide to wait, to let him talk first. I know that now, after the defeat of the partisans, we can expect Nazi reprisals and inspections; THE SITUATION IS CLEAR TO THE NAZIS! THERE IS A RESISTANCE WITHIN THE SLOVAKS.

Late that afternoon, Mr. Marlak comes in with a sad face. "Listen," he begins, "Don't go out any more. Nazis have picked up all the last Jews, and taken them to the little castle on the hills in the forest. It is very bad. You can work here, in the ~~factory~~ SHOP. Nobody cares about you. The neighbors know I always have a cutter in the factory. And besides, with me, people better be 'in good'".... I don't like the tone of that. What does it mean? "With me, people better be 'in good'?" I don't understand. Is my boss a Nazi? HE MUST BE, SINCE HE WEARS A SWASTIC PIN (卐) ON HIS BREAST-POCKET.

I have three sets of false papers, no home, no money, old clothes. I cannot run. I must wait and work. Only God and a miracle can save me now.

I work at night; sleep during the day. Nobody, supposedly knows where I am. I hide a heavy iron bar in the head of my bed. The bed itself is hidden. I put it out only to sleep in it. The girl finisher and the floorboy, Ferko, work as usual. One day I hear Marlak's order: "People," he says. "Nobody knows anything about our cutter. (ME) Understood?"!

Night after night I work in silence, with a tiny spotlight on my hands, and only the mice for company. Outside it is a dark autumn night; inside, there is no sound except my heart beat and the scraping of the mice, SOME ARE IMPERTINANT: THEY CREEP OVER MY WORK--- MY ARMS---

In the rabbit house, rats might jump in a hurry over my neck or head on their way to the rabbits. They wanted nothing to do with me. These mice; they are amazing. I see them at close range. They dance around, turn somersaults like acrobats in a circus. What am I doing, I think to myself, becoming a philosopher, with mice for company? I CHASE THEM AWAY DISGUSTED BUT IN VAIN; A MOMENT LATER THEY ARE BACK---

Sometimes my boss forgets to bring me food. I store small pieces of dry bread, hide them on top of the stove where the mice cannot reach them. I am saving food for an emergency. I am almost certain there will be an emergency.

Several times on a Sunday, Mrs. Greta Marlak brings her two children, boys of eight and ten, and a holiday dinner. I am glad of the food. The boys know nothing about me. Sometimes they come alone to the factory and we talk. I learn from them that after the Nazis repulsed the partisans, they announced that they would officially occupy Slovakia, just like the rest of Czechoslovakia. I listen to the boys as they chatter and try to look unconcerned.

I am not registered in the city hall. My papers are false. I am in danger.

On Sundays I work all day behind tightly drawn shades, without air, breathing in the foul smell of the fur-dyeing that is now part of my job. I am worn out. But I have to keep working.

One time it is perhaps two in the morning before I fall asleep, I am roused out of sleep by a violent knocking at the front window of the store. Someone is shouting in German - "Open the door!"

I am sure they are coming for me. I prepare my defense, the heavy iron bar in my hand. I lie in bed and wait, with my heart pounding. The knocking becomes more and more violent. I hear the crash of breaking glass.

There is more noise of shouting and insults. I hear someone sit down heavily. Then all is quiet.

I can imagine only that the noctural visitor was drunk and fell into a sound sleep after he sat down on the door steps. AFTER HE HAD BROKEN THE DISPLAY WINDOW IN FRONT OF OUR STORE, FACING THE SIDEWALK.

When the boss comes in the next day he demands to know what happened. I try to explain. He is furious. Behind the door entrance he had hidden 150 pounds of sugar. It is gone.

For me, night work is finished. My boss orders me to work during the daytime, at the window facing the courtyard - at my own risk. I am afraid, but nothing seems to happen. Month after month goes by; I am not noticed.

Three months after I begin work in the courtyard window, a Deaths-Head Nazi comes into the courtyard. He sticks his nose against the window and waves his hands. This, I feel, is the end. My legs tremble. He calls me to open the back door of the factory. The front door is closed; the boss had to leave on business.

I have no way out: I must let the Nazi in. He comes into the factory, his heavy boots thumping on the floor, his dirty eyes staring. In a harsh, grating voice he demands: "Where's your boss."

At this moment, I am again face to face with death. I forget, in my terror, the most important thing I was taught by refugees, never answer in German. TO AVOID CONVERSATION & SAY SOMETHING WRONG I reply in perfect German: "My boss went out for some business." My eyes drop to the pistol in its holster on his belt.

He must have caught my look. "Do you like that gun? I show it to you." He pulls out the gun, shows it to me. He is pleasant, now. "You see, so far I never made use of it. The first bullet is designed for a Jew." HE SAYS. I KNEW BY INTUITION THAT SOMETHING LIKE THAT WILL COME The blood rushes from my face. I am sure I am discovered. He is ready to kill me, but first will make a joke of it. I make an excuse, & WALK OUT

I rush out of the ~~factory~~ WORKSHOP to the toilet, bend as low as possible to make the blood return to my face, and go back to the factory. The Deaths-Head Nazi offers me a cigarette. I take it, & PASS HIM A MATCH.

The Nazi raises his voice: "Tell your boss that if my cap is not finished by tomorrow at two in the afternoon, I'll have it made by the Jews instead, by the Jews in the castle in the forest." The Nazi waves his hand carelessly and walks out with heavy-booted steps, slamming the door on his way. MY LEGGS ARE STILL SHAKING.

I sit down to catch my breath. I open the window. I smoke the cigarette, inhaling huge clouds of smoke. Slowly I come back to the world of everyday living.

Three long, agonizing months pass. I work all day in the courtyard window, expecting at any moment to be taken. At night, I lie awake in fear, or doze in uncertain sleep. Days follow days: weeks follow weeks. Time drags on.

One day, my boss comes in with a radiant face. The Russians are attacking Dobsina - "Liberation" is on the way. I still do not believe it. Reports are coming in that the Germans are lost, but they are still in good order and fighting in desperation. They are preparing their retreat.

My boss's wife, a kind-hearted and attractive young woman, is a native of Germany. Automatically, she was pulled into the Deutche Partie in the town. Now she receives an order to be ready to return to her homeland - Germany. She is to take the two boys with her.

Mr. Parlak runs around all day, desperately trying to find a solution. He cannot leave his good business, his relatives, his native town, for Germany. He is sure Germany will be destroyed in an Allied invasion. At all costs, he must save his wife and children and himself.

For a great deal of money, it is arranged. His wife and children leave for a friend's cottage in the country. Parlak's friend is a farmer. She will be safe there. The children will enjoy the country.

A few days later, we can hear the heavy guns of the attacking Russians. At night there is more thunder of heavy guns. People whisper among themselves. There is growing panic among the people of German origin.

In the evening my delivery boy comes with news that the Germans are planning to blow up the new city hall and the railroad bridge at two in the morning. But he says the partisans and Slovak patriots know about it. Many of them are in the city police.

The city police go along with the Germans to help them set the dynamite boxes. With them they take 96 proof whiskey in bottles. At midnight the Slovak police pretend to start drinking. The Germans, encouraged by the cooperation, start drinking the available supply of liquor. Within an hour, the German dynamite crew is asleep, securely fastened to iron bars in a cellar. The Slovak police take good care of them.

By the morning, the German population begins to move out. Some of the old-time residents are forced to "save their lives" and return to their homeland. A few German-born townspeople refuse to return to Germany; they are quickly shot.

At daybreak the next morning we hear the chatter of machine guns out in the fields. The Russians are here. We are free. Or are we?

My boss brings me food late in the afternoon. He announces the "liberation". "But," he says, "The war continues. We must be careful. The Germans will come back." NOBODY CAN DEFEAT GERMANS! ---

I don't believe a word he says. Once the Germans, the invincible Germans retreat, I have a feeling they will not return. I am eager to go outside, to see the soldiers, to offer them my precious store of cigarettes hidden for a long time for this celebration.

I quit my job, MY NOSE WAS BLEEDING; MY BOSS BECAME VERY NERVOUS & WANTED ME TO DO SOME WORK IN THE CELLAR WITH HIS POTATOES. I COULDN'T BEND DOWN, SO NEXT MORNING -132- I WENT TO THE DRAFT-BOARD. THEY WOULDN'T TAKE ME; I WAS TOO EXHAUSTED...

LAST QUARTET

I take a furnished room in the home of Professor Grosz, a friend of Mr. Harlak. He came to the factory several times to talk with my boss. They talked about news on the secret radio.

When he came to the factory, I worked with my face to the window and my back to him. I never saw the face of Professor Grosz until I became his tenant. I was delighted to learn that he was a professor of music, and at one time an excellent violinist. But in all the time he talked with the boss I never dared interrupt. I resolved to find him after the "liberation" - and I did.

During the first few days, Professor Grosz and I spend a great deal of time together. He lets me play on his fine old violin. He shows me music his brother composed.

At the home of a neighbor, I meet Betty, neice of a famous Slovak general. Betty is 21 years old, intelligent, with long silky hair making a lovely picture frame for her pale face. She uses no powder or lipstick. She is a fine person; eager to listen and observe. She talks only when she has something to say.

Once after a long embrace, she walks to the window, looks at the snow covered Tatra Mountains, and says, "Alfred, the neighbors tell me you are a Jew!

"So what?" I reply.

There is a long silence. I walk her home. She has some trouble walking. During her fighting days as a partisan, she was shot in the heel. When she returned home, she found an abandoned farm; weary, dried out cows, sick, smelly chickens. From time to time I gave her money. She would count it carefully, promising, "I give it back to you some day."

I do not give help for her to return it. I feel somewhat insulted.

I find it difficult to stay in my room. I climb hills. I walk in the snow-carpeted forests. It is cold, even though the sun glares brightly. If only I could become a citizen, a legal resident. If only I could start a business of my own.

I get a job in the fur trade. From the first money I make, I buy a violin. It is an old violin, (but not of course, a Stradivarius.) I begin to catch up with my practice. My landlord, Professor Grosz, introduces me to a young man who plays in a quartet at the home of Dr. Teichler.

They tell me that Dr. Teichler is a poor man's doctor. For years he never charged poor people any fees. When danger came, some of these poor people kept him and his family safe for seven long months, until the "liberation". I go to listen to the quartet at Dr. Teichler's home.

The quartet is practicing the F major Quartet of Dvorak for the celebration planned by the town. They will play this quartet to celebrate the "liberation". I listen to the rehearsal.

When they finish, Dr. Teichler asks me, "How is it?

I am indignant. "It is terrible," I say, I FEEL HEAT ON MY CHEEKS...

They are startled. "Let me play first violin," I shout. "You will see the difference."

We begin to play. In a moment, it is new music. I am again playing a quartet. And AGAIN it brings new life to me.

There will be this quartet for "liberation"...If freedom is in this country, I shall play quartets here. If freedom moves out of this country, I shall move also. I shall follow freedom. It will be many years before I play my last quartet; HOPE IS BACK IN MY SOUL...

LAST QUARTET

Epilogue

A few weeks later, as I talk with Betty in my room, the door opens. In my happiest moment in years, I fall into Fredi's arms. My brother is back - healthy and strong, BUT HOW DID HIS FACE CHANGE! CIRCLES UNDER HIS EYES, AND PALE.

The story is short. As soon as active resistance began, the Nazis started to liquidate the tobacco work-camp. But our people were ready. They had a gun. They escaped into the forest in a group of twelve persons. A large family, with their pretty blonde daughter, Bianca, a lyric poet and novelist, and Fredi's girl friend at the camp, as well as several other people. At night they built a deep bunker in the earth deep in the forest, covering it with grass, leaves and broken tree branches. A CAMOUFLAGE.

Other Jews perished in the usual Nazi extermination camps. But these people hid in the forest. Twice a week, Fredi and his friend, Lacy, a strong man, went, gun in hand, to get food and water. They walked four and a half miles to a farmhouse in a small village, where they paid their last money for this food and water.

For long weeks this went on until one time, Fredi and Lacy, burdened with water and gigantic loaves of country bread, were caught by a Slovak-Nazi who quietly watched until they opened the door of the bunker, then pounced on them. He forced them out of their bunker, took all their money, and after long haggling, permitted them to hide in the forest.

They went deeper in the dark forest, built a new bunker, and lived there until they had no more strength to continue their nightly search for food. They made their way to the cellar of the good farmer. He took them all in. They remained in the cellar until "liberation".

That very afternoon Fredi is to leave for his wedding with Bianca. I am very happy for them. HE MET BIANCA IN A LABOUR CAMP PICKING GRAPES. FROM HER DEAR FAMILY ONLY SHE AND HER YOUNGER BROTHER WERE SURVIVERS. SOME UNCLES WERE IN AMERICA, AND SOME SURVIVED IN HIDING

"BIRTH" AND teaching but Neither
[illegible] by family. My brother
[illegible] and I [illegible]
[illegible] They were after all the [illegible]
there are they are!!
That is the point...

WANDA
HANUSIA
MIECIO
WANDA
HELENA

P.S. THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THE LETTER H

EPILOGUE

IN 1947 IN PARIS ON THE BOULEVARD DES BONNES NOUVELLES I MEET AN OLD FRIEND SIGI FLEISCHMAN WITH HIS WIFE. HE SURVIVED IN ITALY WHILE STUDYING MEDICINE. HIS BROTHERS SURVIVED IN LONDON.

ANOTHER TIME, SAME STREET, I MET ARTHIE GOLDFLUSS ALSO A PIANIST WHO STUDIED MEDICINE IN NANCY - FRANCE; I HUGGED HIM EXCITED; WE HAD SUCH A NICE TIME BEFORE THE WAR; PLAYING IN AN ORCHESTRA THAT I CONDUCTED AT THE ACADEMICAL HOUSE IN KRAKOW.

LATER IN 1940. THE GERMANS TURNED THE HOUSE INTO A FREUDEN HOUSE" (A "HOUSE OF PLEASURE"! EMPLOYING POLISH GIRLS AS PROSTITUTES. I HAPPENED TO KNOW ONE OF THEM: VANDA, A VERY "SEXY" PERSONALITY. SHE HAD TO DO IT TO AVOID BEING SENT TO GERMANY"

I make my way to Prague. I can not live in a small village.

I JOIN THE PRAGUE FILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA UNDER THE
OF V. SHA'K, WHO *** ONCE CAME TOVISIT ME IN MY FUR
SHED KITCHEN, WHEN HE SAW MY BABY IN THECRIB HE SAID:

Some months later, a great Zionist friend of ours, Adolph Goldberg, known in Israel as "Saul", comes to see me in Prague. We meet in the evening in a crowded cafe on Vaclacks-Mamesti. A young brunnette IS WAS sitting with him. I seem to know the girl, but I cannot remember from where, THOSE DARK EYES DIDN'T LOSE THEIR BEAUTY...

"From the rabbit house," she says, laughing. It is Genia. She is going to Israel." All four of the women lived in the rabbit house until the "liberation". Adolph - "Saul" - is on his way to Basle, Switzerland for a Zionist conference. On his way back, he plans to see my brother, Fredi. HE IN SLOVAKIA WHERE HE WORKS NOW IN HIS PROF
AS ARCHITECT. I WORK IN PRAGUE AS A FURIER & MUS

Fredi writes to me often. He is very happy. He writes that my old boss, Marlak, liked my work as a furrier and wants me to work with him forever - if I will only come back. HE LOOKS FOR ME ALL OVER
BUT I FELT THAT HE ABUSED ME TO A POINT THAT I STARTE

Once at Zeman's fur store in Prague on business, I meet Simon, my "friend" from the two fur factories and the top bed in the concentration camp at Plaszow. He escaped right after I did, because he was afraid they would hang him when Hemio and I escaped. He embraces me, almost in tears, kisses my cheeks. I tell him about the piece of bread I stole from him because he never shared his bread with me. I invite him to dinner in my home in Prague - but he is ashamed and refuses. He is the man who told my boss that he could work three times as fast as I could. He is the man who would not share his bread with me, AND HE HAD PLENTY FROM HIS BROTHER WHO WAS A "CAPO" (JEWISH-POLICEMAN

BLEC
FRO
MY
NOSE
FRO
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ON

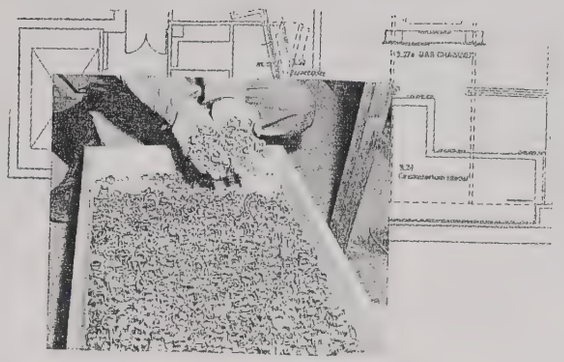
***

"KADOSH, ADONAY ZEBAOTH" One morning, as I walk across Karlov-Most, King Carl's Bridge, I see a gigantic status of Christ on the Cross, with letters of Hebrew over the cross. I look at it in wonder. He, too, was a Jew. I ALWAYS ADMIRED QUIET GENTLE, JUST MAN, WHO DIED ON

"OLLY is GOD"

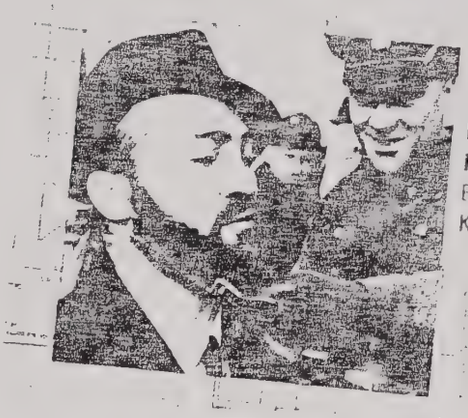
END

-136- OVER-PLEASE CROSS...



Thousands of wedding rings the Germans removed from their victims in order to salvage the gold. U.S. 1st Army troops found these rings in a cave adjoining the Buchenwald concentration camp near Weimar, Germany on May 5, 1945.
National Archives, Washington

These Zyklon-B cans held crystalline prussic acid (originally intended for the extermination of rodents and insects) used in the murder of Jews in the gas chambers. (On loan from the State Museum at Oswiecim to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.)



German propaganda p
of an SS man cutting th
beard of a Jew on a stre
in Warsaw in the fall of 1
Bildarchiv Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Berlin

1947

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"SEXY" ON KING-CARL'S BRIDGE
TO AV

FIRST
MY WIFE
ARLETTE & MY DAUGHTER MARIE-LOUISE
"ON THE BABY-CARRIAGE)
AUTUMN — 1946
IN PRAGUE

New York, NY 10040

VAL-KILL COTTAGE
HYDE PARK, DUTCHESS COUNTY
NEW YORK

October 24, 1953

Dear Mr. Mur:

I am very sorry but my time is so well filled at present I would have no opportunity to read your manuscript. I can only suggest that you consult a reputable literary agent.

Very sincerely yours,

Eleanor Roosevelt

Inmates at forced labor in the snow and cold at Natzweiler-Struthof camp in France.
E.C.P. Armees—France

MRS F.D.R.